

READ ABOUT AND TRAVEL AROUND  
**ISTANBUL**







READ ABOUT AND TRAVEL AROUND

# ISTANBUL

**Harun Kirkil**

“Have they, then, never journeyed about the earth and beheld what happened in the end to those [deniers of the truth] who lived before their time? Greater were they in power than they are, and in the impact which they left on earth...”

*(al-Mu'min, 40: 21)*

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## READ ABOUT AND TRAVEL AROUND ISTANBUL

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## INTRODUCTION

Why is such a book written?

It is difficult to give an answer!

Describing Istanbul in itself is main difficulty.

It is really a great courage, even temerity, to describe a city which has already been expressed in the writings, put into lines with beautiful wordings, poetized in the verses, and sang in the melodies by this nation's leading intellectuals and connoisseurs of art and thought.

This book was not written to describe Istanbul. Probably it will be a very stereotyped utterance; but Istanbul cannot be described, it can only be experienced.

The main thought in writing this work, possibly in the most obvious form, has been mentioned in these lines of Nihad Sami Banarlı;

“**German miracle** was born owing to their faith in that they accomplished great things in history. This national trust has been given to the Germans by **their etiquette** that nicely introduces the great parts of their history, its victories and pages of honor to their children. When the Germans ascertained that they had a national saga in their history and the great cathedrals in their homeland have been built by their own architects, they have believed in their national genius; they are proud of being German and even the greatest national disasters of the last century could not undermine their national trust.

Creating today's Germany out of their completely destroyed land could only be possible by such a trust.

With the following condition that Germans did not lie to their children; they did not revile or refute the great parts of their history with this or that purpose. They perfectly understood that there is not any greater creative power for the children of a nation than the faith in being a child of a nation that accomplished many great things in the history.” (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Devlet ve Devlet Terbiyesi*, p.77)

We prepared this book in order that the children of our land would believe in that they are the children of a nation that accomplished great things in its history.

They are the descendants of *mujahid* (warriors of Islam) ancestors who believed in the ideal expressed in the saying “Constantinople will surely be conquered,” gave life to a dream, and actualized an imagination... They are the children of the architect ancestors who transformed the conquered cities into the Muslim lands adorning them with the domes and the minarets, with the mosques and the tombs, with the fountains and the water dispensers ... We just wanted to hold a mirror to the history of one of our cities in order that our children would not remain devoid of the dazzles of our glamorous past.

Harun Kırkıl

Uskudar / June 2012

## ISTANBUL: THE GATE OF THE FELICITY

Istanbul is both economically and culturally one of the most important cities in Turkey. In regards to its location, due to being on the commissure between Asia and Europe, it became a land on which many cultures have united and socialized and people from distinct languages, religions and nationalities have lived together.

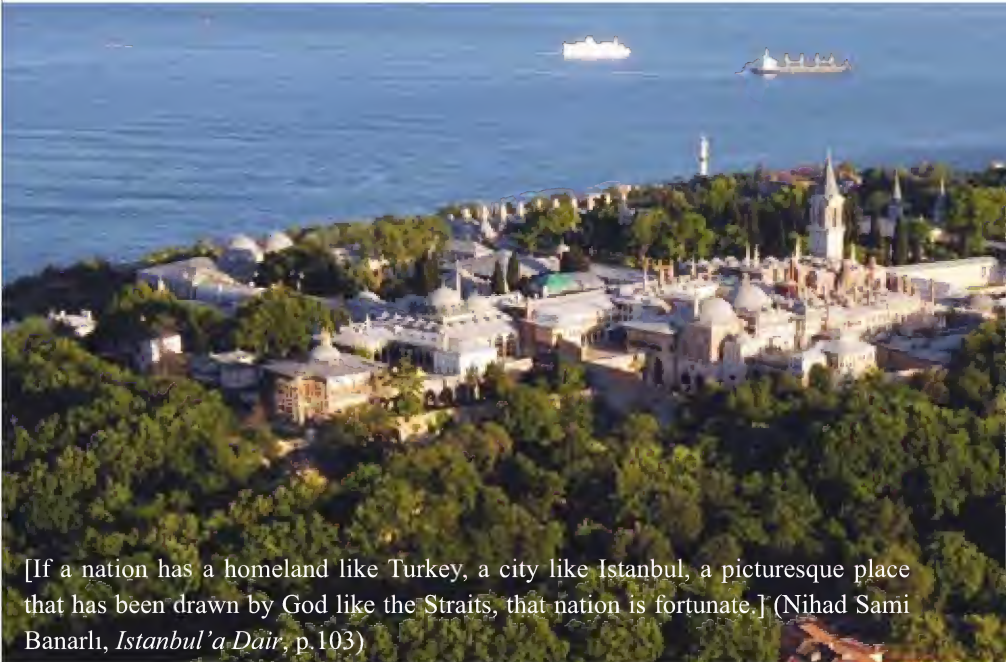
Istanbul is like the biggest outdoor museum of the world in which hundreds of pieces that belong to Byzantine and Ottoman periods are on display. Istanbul, whose date of emergence goes back

to as early as 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, is one of the ancient cities of the world.

Istanbul has been established by the Megarians as a small colony in 667 BCE. After the name of Megarian King Byzas, this new city was called 'Byzantium'.

Istanbul was declared as the capital city of the empire by Roman Emperor Constantine I in 330 BCE and the name of city changed as "**Nova Roma**" meaning "New Rome".

After the death of Emperor Constantine, the city was named after him



[If a nation has a homeland like Turkey, a city like Istanbul, a picturesque place that has been drawn by God like the Straits, that nation is fortunate.] (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Istanbul'a Dair*, p. 103)



and started to be called “**Constantinople**”.

After it was conquered by Fatih Sultan Mehmed Khan in 1453, the name of ‘Constantiniyya’ continued to be used. Istanbul was also named by Turks as ‘Asitane (the capital city)’ and ‘Der-saadet (gate of felicity and happiness).

Istanbul, the capital city of the great states throughout the history, has become one of the centers in which the world diplomacy has been shaped and directed.

It was the capital city of the Roman Empire between the years of 330-395 BCE. It became the capital city of the East Rome between 395-1204 and 1261-1453 CE. And it also served as the capi-

tal city of the Latin Empire between the years of 1204-1261 CE. Istanbul, which was conquered in 1453, became the capital city of the Ottoman Empire until 1922.

O.G. Busbecq, who was a Viennese ambassador in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, summarized the historical characteristics of Istanbul as follows; “**It is as if Allah created Istanbul to become the capital city of the world.**”

Many emperors and commanders were dazzled by the beauty of Istanbul. Napoleon Bonaparte, too, mentioned his feelings for Istanbul as follows; “**If the Earth were a single state, Istanbul would be its capital.**” Therefore, this city, which was embellished all of



the emperors' dreams, was besieged many times by Sassanids, the Avars, Bulgarians, Muslim Arabs, and Russians.

After Muslims began to conquer Asia Minor following the victory of Manzikert in 1071, Christian states united and started the Crusades in order to throw Muslims out of Anatolian territo-

ries. In the fourth of those expeditions, the Crusaders surrounded and occupied the city. The city was plundered for days. Thousands of people were murdered and many places of worship were destroyed, including Hagia Sophia. After that invasion, all precious treasures of Byzantine were carried to European countries. Lat-



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in Kingdom, established in Byzantine, lasted until 1261.

In 1261, once again Istanbul was captured by the Byzantine dynasty. However, after that date, Istanbul never became as mighty and sumptuous as it had been in the past.



In the following periods, after Ottoman State was founded and gained strength, Byzantine was surrounded by the Ottomans.

Encouraged by one of the sayings of our beloved Prophet (pbuh) heralding the conquest of Istanbul, Muslim states tried to conquer Istanbul several times in order to be the owner of this honor.

First siege of Muslims took place in 668, during the period of Umayyad caliph Muawiya. Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari was martyred during the siege. Istanbul was surrounded three times throughout the period of Umayyads and once during the period of Abbasids.

Istanbul, surrounded by Yıldırım Beyazıd, his son Musa Çelebi, and Murat II during Ottoman period, could only be conquered by Fatih Sultan Mehmed on May 29, 1453, after a siege lasting for 59 days.

Istanbul acquired its real identity and flourished after being an Ottoman city. In fifty years after the conquest, Istanbul became the greatest city of the world.

Yahya Kemal expresses the following lines about Istanbul as a city of Ottoman period:

*“Istanbul was not founded only by Sultans and public. Many Muslim Turks who moved from various parts of the country, from Konya, Bursa, Erzurum, the Hejaz, Baghdad, and from Eastern territories such as Tripoli and Algeria*

*and then stayed and settled down in this city - established it. They did this together with their women, old people, with their arts, traditional music, folk and Ottoman poetries, with its architect; in short with all parts of the country and with all skills and memories they brought from every century of their history.”* (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Yahya Kemal'in Hatıraları*, p. 51)”

At the end of World War I, the period of being a capital city ended with the occupation of Istanbul on 13 November 1918.

After this date, even though Istanbul is not officially the capital city, it has

unofficially continued to be the one in the hearts.

Let's listen to the words of Samiha Ayverdi;

“Turkey, the Glorious homeland created by a great nation longing for thousands of years and fighting for it for hundreds of years, is beautiful, lovely and unique with each and every one of its cities, plains, mountains and rivers. And Istanbul is the composition of this rich uniqueness.” (Samiha AYVERDI, *Istanbul Geceleri*, p. 5) □



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# THE MOSQUES AND THE KULLIYAHS

(ISLAMIC SOCIAL COMPLEXES)

- ❖ AYASOFYA (HAGIA SOPHIA)
- ❖ EYUP SULTAN
- ❖ FATIH
- ❖ BAYEZID
- ❖ SULTAN SELIM
- ❖ ŞEHZADE
- ❖ SULEYMANIYE
- ❖ SULTAN AHMET
- ❖ YENI CAMI (NEW MOSQUE)
- ❖ HIRKA-I SHARIF



**THE MOSQUES AND THE KULLIYAHS (Islamic Social Complexes)**

Mosques are places in which the believers who want to worship gather, communicate, converse and take lessons from the religious functionaries. Although mosques are currently used only as places of worship, they carried out various services in the past. Hence, mosques are structures that are situated at the very center of Muslims' lives.

In Islam, performing the acts of worship (*ibadah*), especially in congregation, preserving the mosques, taking care of their maintenance and repairing them are very important acts of worship. For this purpose, thousands of mosques have been built by many Muslim benefactors. When you go into a city for the first time, you can immediately recognize whether this is a Muslim city or not

by means of the minarets and the domes which appear on the landscape of the city.

When we use the term “*Jami* or mosque”, there are some other words that we need to introduce, such as “*kulliyah*,” “*masjid*,” “*namazgah*” etc.

Some mosques are not merely the places of worship. These are called ‘*kulliyah*’. Such as; the Kulliyah of Sultanahmed or the Kulliyah of Suleymaniye. They have been established to carry out many different services in addition to being a place of worship. Around a mosque, there are some extra facility structures like a madrasa (college), a library, a school, a hospital, a soup kitchen, fountains, and a bathhouse.



Part of the Sultan Ahmed complex



It includes shops and a market place the incomes of which were endowed to cover the expenses of the mosque. There are also guesthouses for those who need a shelter. There is a tomb and a small graveyard (hazira) next to the mosque. All these structures together are called “*kulliyah*.” It is not required that all what we have mentioned above exist in a kulliyah. Kulliyahs like the Kulliyah of Fatih, Süleymaniye, or Sultanahmed built by the Ottoman sultans are magnificent ones which include most of the above mentioned facilities. However, there are also some small-scale kulliyahs built by some generous statesmen. Kulliyahs are the central structures of a

city or a district in which they were built. The cities and districts were flourished around the kulliyahs.

The word *Jami* means “gatherer, collector, or compiler.” As to the term “*masjid*,” it means “a place in which acts of worship and prostration are performed.” Both of these words, i.e. *jami* and *masjid*, have been used interchangeably throughout the Islamic history. As for today, only small places of worship are called “*masjid*.”

The places which are not surrounded by walls and which are constructed with simple structures to perform prayer in open air are called “*namazgah*.”



Namazgah of Azeps built in 1407 / Gallipoli

Some historical mosques in Istanbul can easily be distinguished from the others. They are called “Salatin mosques.” It means mosques that were built by the sultans. The mosques built in the name of a sultan from the Ottoman family, in the name of a prince, in the name of a wife of a sultan, or his mother or his daughter are called Salatin mosques. The most distinguishing feature of such mosques is that they have two or more minarets. This was a historical tradition. A second minaret could not be built to any mosque which was not a Salatin mosque. Such as Mihrimah Sultan Mosque, Valide-i Atik, Ortakoy (Grand Majidiye), New

Mosque, Nuruosmaniye Mosque are among the Salatin mosques.

There is an order among the Salatin mosques of Istanbul: The most significant one is Hagia Sophia (Ayasofya) Mosque for it represents the conquest of Istanbul. Then Fatih Mosque comes next because it was constructed by the conqueror (*fatih*) of Istanbul. Süleymaniye and Sultanahmed (Blue Mosque) are the ones that come next in the list. When a funeral prayer call (*sala*) started to be recited from all these four mosques at the same time, it meant that the ruling sultan had passed away. □

Ortakoy Mosque built by Sultan Abdülmecid in 1853



# AYASOFYA (HAGIA SOPHIA) MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYYA

ISTANBUL



“I discovered a truth during my trips. There are two spiritual bases of this state: First is the call for prayer which Sultan Mehmet had it recited from the minaret of Hagia Sophia, which is still being recited! Second is the Qur’an which Sultan Selim had it recited in front of “Hirka-i Saadet” (mantle of the felicity) that is still being recited.” (Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, *Aziz İstanbul*, p.120)



**AYASOFYA (Hagia Sophia) MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYAH**

The center of Byzantine Empire was the area on which Blue Mosque is situated today. At the place of today's Topkapı Palace, there used to be the palace of Byzantine Empire. At the place where Blue Mosque is situated now, there used to be a hippodrome in which great races were organized and war games were played. The Church of Hagia Sophia located at the very center of the state was the greatest temple of Byzantine Empire and Orthodox Christians. In Greek, the

term "Hagia Sophia" means "holy wisdom" or "divine wisdom."

Construction of the church started during the time of Constantine I. However, it was completed in 360 CE, at the time of Constantine II. This first building of Hagia Sophia was damaged by a fire. It was restored by Theodosios II in 415 and opened to worship again. During a revolt, it was completely burned down.

Emperor Justinian decided to build a magnificent church in the place of this







totally ruined church. Its construction was started in 532 and completed in 537. It was constructed by two architects named Isidoros of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles. According to the historical sources, almost ten thousand people worked in its construction.

The materials used for its construction had been brought from Mediterranean countries. Pillars of Artemisia Temple had been brought to Constantinople and used in the construction of Hagia Sophia. The building constructed by Justinian is the one that has survived until this day.

Hagia Sophia lived its worst days in 1204 when the Latin invaded the city. It was exposed to the grievousness not

appropriate to the sacredness of a temple. It was plundered and destroyed. Its precious properties and sacred treasures were stolen and taken to the European churches.

When Byzantine came into power again in 1261, Hagia Sophia was in ruins. People of the plundered city tried to revive Hagia Sophia once again. However, this time an earthquake that happened in 1344 dreadfully wore the old body of Hagia Sophia out. Because the state was in financially bad situation, they could not have the beautiful temple restored and it was closed for worship for a while. It was restored in 1354 with the help of special taxes collected from the community and by voluntary donations and opened to worship again.

The size of the structure is 100 m by 70 m. It has almost 7500 m<sup>2</sup> interior area. It is a two-floor structure. It has a total of 107 pillars; 40 of them are downstairs and 67 of them are upstairs. Height of the tallest ones of the pillars is almost 20 meters. Their radius is 1.5 meter and they weigh approximately 70 tons. The pillars used in the building are older than the structure, for they had been brought from various temples of Anatolia in order to be used in the construction.

Because its dome collapsed and was reconstructed during the Byzantine Empire, it is not exactly in circular

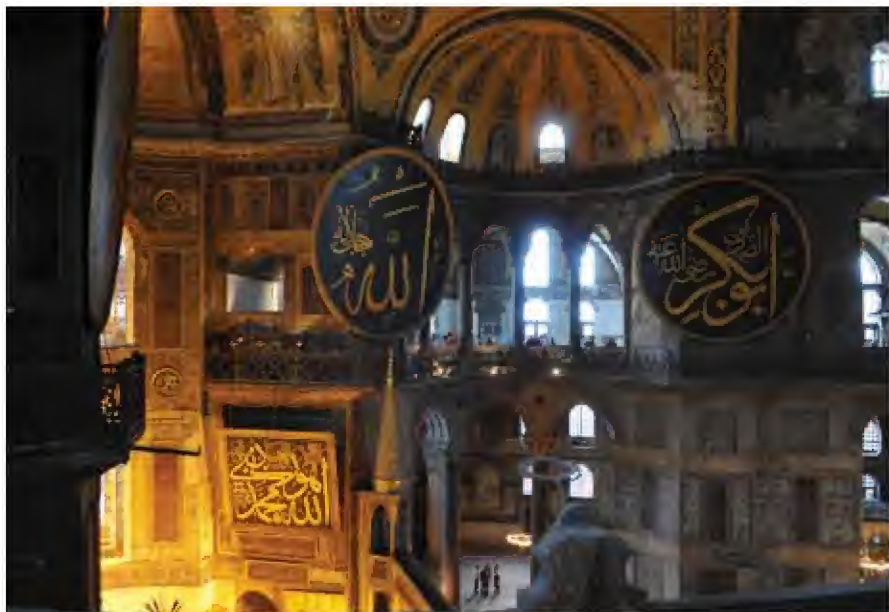
shape, but close to an ellipsis. It has two different radiuses. The diameter of the dome is between 30.80 m and 32.6 m. and its height is 55.60 m.

When Fatih Sultan Mehmed conquered the city in 1453, he opened a new page in the history of this building that had been used as a church for 916 years.

When Fatih Sultan Mehmed conquered the city, he took only Hagia Sophia as a booty share for himself.

The church was endowed and transformed into a mosque by the Sultan after





the conquest with the first Friday prayer led by Sultan Mehmed himself.

Hagia Sophia was especially protected by Sultan Fatih. Nothing was done to harm the physical structure or the sacredness of the temple. No harm was done to its decorations remaining from the period when it had been a church. Only some of its mosaic decorations that are against the Islamic faith were covered with plaster.

Sultan Mehmed endowed many properties to provide revenues for the Hagia Sophia Mosque. In a short span of time, a prayer niche (*mihrab*), minaret and madrasa were built in and around the mosque. Subsequently another minaret was constructed by Sultan Beyazid II and then two more minarets were added by Sultan Selim II. The minarets added

at the time of Sultan Selim II were constructed by Mimar Sinan. Mimar Sinan also repaired Hagia Sophia Mosque by the command of Sultan Selim II. All houses and buildings constructed around the mosque which were giving harm to its structure were demolished. The flank walls carrying the dome of the mosque were strengthened with the consolidation buttresses. Therefore, the old Hagia Sophia was saved from a collapse like the collapse of the ramshackle Byzantine.

As to the Sultan Mahmud I, he constructed a shadirwan (water-tank with a fountain to perform ablution), which is a glorious marvel of art, a primary school, a soup kitchen (*imarat*), a library and a special section for the sultan and a prayer niche (*mihrab*).



Thus Hagia Sophia, which was transformed into a full complex of facilities, became one of the most favorite places of worship in the Ottoman State. It started to get the attention and care it had never been received throughout its history. Hagia Sophia that served as a mosque for 481 years has always been a valuable reminder of the conquest in the sight of Muslims.

Hagia Sophia, one of the most gorgeous pieces of the history of architecture, has been used as a temple for almost 15 centuries. In this respect, it is one of the oldest temples of the world.

Many Ottoman rulers are buried in the tomb in its yard. Sultan Selim II, Sultan Murad III, Sultan Mehmed III, Sultan Mustafa I, Sultan Ibrahim and some members of the Ottoman family are buried there.

One of the most important events that the mosque witnessed throughout the Ottoman history took place when Egypt was conquered in 1517. Mutawakkil III, Muslims' Caliph at the time, transferred his authority of caliphate to Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Selim after a ceremony held in Hagia Sophia. The caliph who ascended to the pulpit in the mosque declared Sultan Selim's caliphate and robed his mantle to the sultan. Until that time caliphs used to be called as "*Hakim al Haramayn al- Sharifayn*" (ruler of Mecca and Medina). Yavuz Sultan Selim said, "We cannot rule over



Mecca and Medina. We can only be at their service." And he changed that title as "*Khadim al Haramayn al Sharifayn*" (the servant of Mecca and Medina).

Hagia Sophia Mosque was closed to worship because of restoration in 1932. A group of American scientists, with the permission of Turkish administration, started a study to uncover the mosaics covered with the plaster by Sultan Mehmed II. During these restoration works, Hagia Sophia has been turned into a museum with a political fait accompli and opened to visit as a museum in 1935.



When Fatih Sultan Mehmed, the conqueror of Istanbul or the second owner of the mosque, endowed Hagia Sophia as a mosque, he wrote a curse in his endowment deed, which reads as follows:

*“May the curse of Allah and of the angels and of all Muslims be upon those who change this mosque’s feature to be a place of worship! May them stay in the torment which never lessens down! May there be anybody who looks at their face and intercedes them available!”* (Osman Nuri TOPBAS, *Abide Sahsiyetleri ve Muesseseleriyle Osmanlı*, p.131)

The calligraphic boards on which the names of Allah (Almighty) and Muhammad (pbuh) and the four caliphs are written have a special characteristic. These boards written by Qadiaskar (Military Judge) Mustafa Izzet Effendi are 7.5 m in diameter. They are the greatest examples of the art of Islamic calligraphy in this size. They were brought down from their places during the restoration, but they could not be taken out from the doors because of their size. They were placed back to their original locations in 1951 with the order of Adnan Menderes, the prime minister of the time. □

## EYÜP SULTAN MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYA



“Surely, Constantinople (Istanbul) will be conquered.  
How blessed the commander who will conquer it, and how  
blessed the army that will conquer it!”

(Ahmed, IV, 335; Hakim, IV, 468/ 8300)



### EYÜP SULTAN MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYAH

The mosque and its district is named after Abu Eyüp al Ansari (r.a.), one of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh). This distinguished Companion who is known as **“Eyüp Sultan”** amongst the Turkish community and gave the real value to the city is buried in the tomb next to the mosque. He hosted our Beloved Prophet (pbuh) for almost six months in his house when he migrated from Mecca to Medina. Eyüp Sultan was also among the maternal relatives of our Prophet.

With the desire to be one of the soldiers of the Prophet (pbuh) praised in the above mentioned Prophetic saying, he participated the siege of Istanbul which was carried out by Umayyads in 668-669, and was martyred there.

Before his martyrdom, he had bequeathed the Muslim soldiers around him to dig his grave to the nearest place to the walls of the city. He wanted his grave to be a boundary stone for the soldiers who were going to come after them, in case Istanbul could not be conquered by them.

His grave had been lost for almost eight centuries following his burial. After the conquest of Istanbul, the place of his grave was discovered with a miracle manifested by Akşemsetdin, master of Sultan Mehmed II.





Fatih Sultan Mehmed had immediately a tomb built on this grave. In 1458, a mosque, a madrasa, a soup-kitchen and a public bath house were also constructed near the mosque by the sultan. Unfortunately, the mosque we have today is not the same mosque, because the first one was so much damaged by an earthquake that happened in 1766 that it could not be repaired. It was demolished by the order of Sultan Selim III and a new mosque was constructed between 1798 and 1800.

The tomb is the most significant structure in the complex around Eyüp Sultan Mosque. Utmost care has been shown to the tomb out of respect to the

person buried there. The tomb has an octagon shape with only one dome. The tiles used for the decoration are from 16th century, and they are very valuable. The cover of the wooden sarcophagus, adorned with tinsel, and its pure silver lattice are really marvels of art. Public bathhouse of the complex is the oldest Ottoman bathhouse that has survived until today. Unfortunately, the madrasa and the soup-kitchen did not survive.

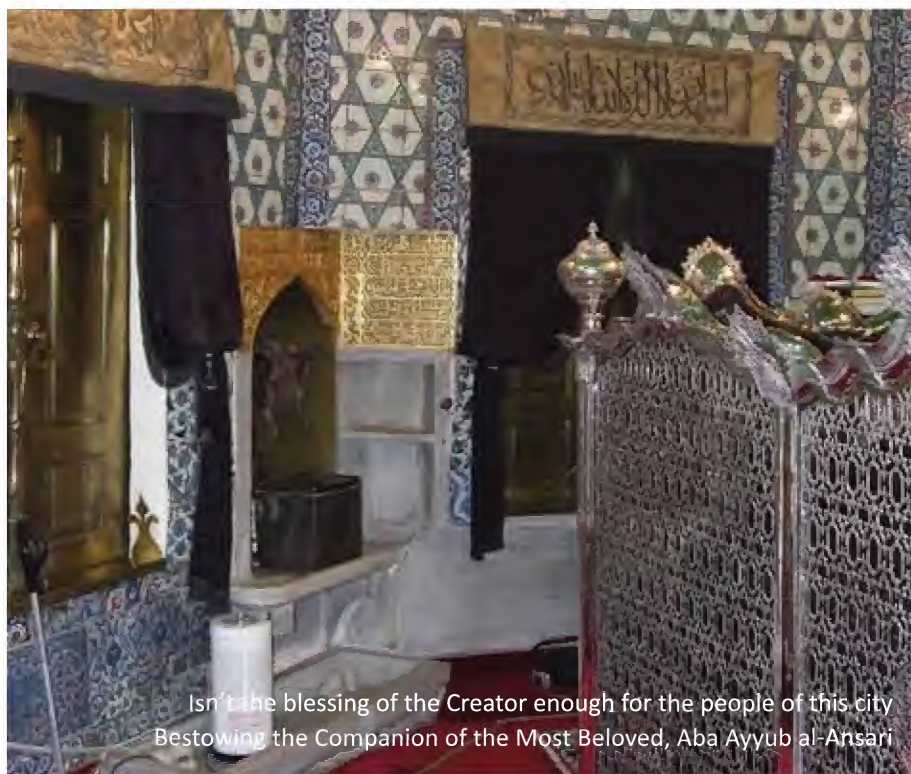
Due to the great worth attributed to Eyüp Sultan, many people have desired his grave to be there. Surrounding area of the kulliyah has been ornamented, in the passing centuries, with tombs and graves.



The complex of Eyüp Sultan has a very special place in the Ottoman history. The ceremonies of girding the sultanate sword organized for the new Sultan's ascending to the throne used to be held in front of the tomb of Eyüp Sultan. This tradition of the state was started with Sultan Mehmed. While his own ceremony held next to the tomb, Sultan's teacher Akşemseddin girded the sultan with the sword.

The Kulliyah of Eyüp Sultan has been a very significant visiting place for centuries for both Muslims of Istanbul

and Muslims living in other cities of Anatolia. Newborn babies have been brought and see the first day light of their lives there. People whose funerals have been performed in this mosque say goodbye to those whom they left behind in this life. You may see boys circumcised there. You may say "amen" for the prayers made by newlywed girls in their snow-white bridal dresses to have a peaceful family. In sum, if there is a life passing without performing even one prayer at Eyüp Sultan Mosque that life cannot be considered as it has ever been lived. □



Isn't the blessing of the Creator enough for the people of this city  
Bestowing the Companion of the Most Beloved, Aba Ayyub al-Ansari

## FATIH MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYA



“For we do not have an architectural literature and history and because of some complex narrations, we vaguely know our honorable architects like old Sinan, Ayas, Hayreddin, Kemaleddin. Our ancestors did know how to construct ingeniously buildings not just in architecture but in every field; however, they forgot to write about them. This is our tragic misfortune. (Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, *Aziz İstanbul*, p.57)”

### FATIH MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYAH

Fatih Mosque is one of the kulliyahs that gave their names to the districts in which they are located.

It was constructed in between 1463 and 1470 by architect Atik (freed slave) Sinan upon the command of Sultan Mehmed II. The Kulliyah of Fatih Mosque is the biggest structure compared with the ones built until its time. At the same time, it is one of the most significant pieces of Turkish-Islamic architecture of the classical period.

The Kulliyah of Fatih is a perfect one with its madrasas, library, guest-house, caravansary, bazaar, hospital, and bathhouse.

The mosque was established on ruins of a church which belongs Byzantine period.

Unfortunately, the mosque constructed by Sultan Mehmed II could not survive to our day for it was heavily damaged by the earthquakes happened in Istanbul. The first mosque was repaired after it had been substantially damaged during the great earthquake in 1509. It was heavily damaged once more during the earthquakes in 1557 and 1754. In the 1766 earthquake, its dome was completely collapsed and the walls were damaged so much that it could not been repaired. It was reconstructed by Sultan Mustafa III in 1767. This new Fatih Mosque was built by the Architect Mehmet Tahir.







Even though Fatih Mosque is a building from classical period, one can see some baroque ornamentation in it coming from its reconstruction in 18th century.

The big dome (26 m in diameter) placed on four marble columns has been supported by four half domes. The porches and the shadirwan (water-tank with some fountains) in the inner courtyard of the mosque are the parts survived from the original mosque.

One of the most important parts of the Kulliyah is its madrasa. It has become the basis of Istanbul University. According to the narrations, even the builder of the kulliyah of great Ottoman Sultan Fatih Sultan Mehmed wanted to be a student in this madrasa. For this purpose, he was tested by the teachers of the madrasa, and after he passed those tests,

he got admitted to it as a student. To be honest, when we think about today's educational system in which the wealthy get admission to any school they want, it is hard to believe that a sultan took a very hard examination in order to be a student in a school built by his orders.

Unfortunately, a part of this proverbial madrasa was pitilessly demolished because of the construction of Fevzi Paşa Street. Unfortunately, the structures of the guesthouse, the bazaar and the bathhouse attached to the kulliyah could not reach today, either.

There are three tombs built at the qiblah direction of the mosque. Sultan Mehmed II and his wife Gulbahar Hatun are buried in two of these tombs. In the other tomb, mother of Sultan Mahmud II Nakshidil Sultan is buried.

### **He Who Lives by the Sword Dies by the Sword!**

Fatih Sultan Mehmed Khan, who ruled the Ottoman Empire between 1451 and 1481, conquered almost 200 castles, 14 states and 2 empires. He did not live even for three successive months in his palace constructed in the city conquered by him on 29 May 1453. Sultan Fatih lived his entire life running from one military campaign to another on the saddle of a horse for the sake of Allah. Again, he passed away when he was in a military campaign.

As the saying goes, he who lives by the sword dies by the sword.

There are two nice narrations related to Fatih Mosque. First, one is about Sultan Fatih, the first builder of the mosque.

### **The Sultan Who was defeated by the Justice**

Sultan Mehmed II thought the mosque he was planning to build to be as enormous and as majestic as Hagia Sophia was. Before he set out for a long campaign, he met the Christian architect of the mosque, and asked him to build a huge place of worship. For this purpose, huge mono-blocks needed as pillars were found. Soon afterwards the campaign was started.

Several months later when Fatih Sultan Mehmed Khan returned from the campaign, he learned that the Christian architect truncated the pillars and made them shorter. That mosque, the construction of which was ongoing was smaller than the Sultan wanted it to be. Thinking



that the Christian architect built it intentionally smaller, the Sultan became so angry that he punished the architect by cutting his hands.

The architect thought that he was right. In order to get his due from the ruler, he complained about him to the qadi (judge) of Istanbul.

Qadi Hizir Beg wrote a letter to summon Sultan Fatih to the court. According to customs of the state, his addressing to ruler was supposed to be like **“al-Sultan ibn al-Sultan al-Ghazi Abu al-Fath Muhammed Khan-i Thani.”** However, Hizir Beg’s addressing to the Sultan was as follows **“Mehmed, the Son of Murad! Come to the court on such and such day, at such and such hour!”**

On the day of trial, Sultan went to the court building in Uskudar and sat in the defendant’s chair. In the court, only the qadi could sit down during the trial, the plaintiff and the defendant could not. When Hizir Beg saw the sultan sitting, he warned him saying:

- You are here as an offender, stand up!

Upon this warning, Sultan stood up and defended himself standing. At the end of the trial, Sultan was found guilty. In accordance with the verse of retaliation (qisas), qadi ruled that the sultan’s hands were to be cut in the same vein. In response to this verdict, Sultan said:

- Ruling belongs only to Allah.







Witnessing such a sense of justice, the bewildered Christian architect said to the qadi that:

- I give up my claim and accept the blood money (diyah).

After the matter was concluded in this way, Fatih said to Hızır Beg that:

- I congratulate you for you were afraid of Allah, not me.

Qadi Hızır Beg took out a mace under his pulpit and said that:

- If you had not accepted my decision, I would have crushed your head with this.

Sultan in return showed his sword hidden under his robe and said that:

- If you had not ruled justly, I would have beheaded you with this.

After the trial, Fatih gave to the Christian architect a house out of his own wealth. Thereupon the Christian architect said:

- “There is no equal of this level of justice in the world. From now on, I am a Muslim.” He said the statement of shahadah (or saying that there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad (pbuh) is His Messenger), converted to Islam, and he was honored with the true guidance. (Osman Nuri Topbaş, *Tarihten Günümüze İbret Işıkları*, p.195-197)



Laleli Mosque

### **The Sultan Who Had His Mosque Snatched**

Sultan Mustafa III is one of the most beneficent Ottoman rulers. He is especially known with the mosques he constructed but did not name after himself.

First, Sultan Mustafa III had a mosque constructed in Uskudar. He had a school, a bathhouse and fountain built for this mosque that was opened to worship in 1761. Near the mosque there was a water-well regarded to be curative by the community. Such wells used to be called among the public as “Ayazma”. Because of this water well, the mosque started to be called “Ayazma Mosque”.

Thereafter, Sultan had one more mosque constructed in Aksaray. But this mosque started to be called “Laleli Mosque” because of a friend of Allah (awliya) named Laleli Baba living in the neighborhood of the mosque. Moreover, modern day Laleli district has taken its name from the mosque.

After Fatih Mosque was substantially damaged because of an earthquake,

he nearly reconstructed the mosque from its foundations. However, this mosque was not named after Sultan Mustafa III, either. It continued to be called “Fatih Mosque” out of respect to its original founder Fatih Sultan Mehmed II.

After all these, Sultan Mustafa III said that:

- I had three mosques constructed. All of them were gone to the others. One of them was taken by one of my ancestors and was named as Fatih Mosque. The other one was taken by a friend of Allah. People call it Laleli Mosque; and the last one was taken by the water. It became Ayazma Mosque. □



Ayazma Mosque



## BAYEZID MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYA

ISTANBUL



In the architecture of our ancestors, not even a piaster was wasted. Many dervishes, workers and masters would do their best in their works in order to fully deserve the earned money, and also for they believe that the Greatest Artist desires as such. This was infused into the business manners of the masters of non-Turkish and non-Muslim minorities in the same vein (minorities from some nations like Armenians and Greeks) (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *İstanbul'a Dair*, p.24)

### BEYAZID MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYAH

Some districts in Istanbul are named after the mosques built within their borders. Beyazid Mosque is one of them. The district in which it is located has taken its name from the mosque.

It was constructed by Sultan Beyazid II between 1500 and 1505 years. The identity of its architect is controversial. Three names are mentioned in the sources as its architect, Mimar Hayreddin, Mimar Kemaleddin or Yakubshah b. Sultanshah.

There is a mosque, a soup kitchen, a primary school, guesthouses, a madrasa, a bathhouse and a caravansary in Kulliyah of Beyazid. Constituent buildings of Kulliyah are not symmetrical as in the Kulliyah of Fatih. They were constructed in a scattered form in the Kulliyah.

The dome of the mosque is 16.75 m in diameter. The minarets of this mosque are unique to it and distinguish it from the other mosques. Contrary to the building style of the other mosques in Istanbul, the distance between the minarets of Beyazid Mosque is further. The distance between the two minarets is 79 meters.

Stonemasonry, woodworking and the stained glasses of the mosque are precious pieces of art. Materials remaining from Byzantine were used in the production of the courtyard upholstery and pillars of the shadirwan. It is especially possible to see the traces of Byzantine Empire on the pillars of the shadirwan.

Buildings of the soup kitchen and the caravansary that are situated on the left side of the mosque and survived until today currently serve as Beyazid State Library.





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### The Poor Man with a Rich Heart

A remarkable incident, occurred during the construction of the mosque, is narrated as follows:

Daily wages of the construction workers of the mosque used to be left at a certain place in a pot. Then the workers would go to that place and pick their wages up from this pot. However, there was always the amount of one worker's wage left in it at the end of the day. First, they thought that they were leaving the extra money by mistake, so they checked the accounts. However, they did not see any mistake in the accounts. When they investigated why there had been extra money left in the pot, it was understood that a worker was not taking his wage.

They asked him why he had not taken it. The worker shyly responded that:

- I have no wealth. For this reason, I could not do charity work in this temporary world as much as I wish. This was making me sad. I decided that I would work for construction of this mosque free, so this would be my charity in this world.

They said to this poor man with a rich heart:

- Gentleman! This mosque is the donation of the sultan. Therefore, you should take your rightfully earned wage. Work here physically; but get your due and donate it wherever you want! (Osman Nuri Topbas, *Tarihten Günümüze İbret Işıkları*, p. 208)



### One Time in a Week

Sultan Beyazıd II occasionally came and worked in the construction of his own mosque. The following incident is narrated in respect to this matter.

One day while Sultan was working, something strange attracted his attention. One of the walls built by a worker was rising faster than the other ones. The wall master was tirelessly working apace. Sultan Beyazıd immediately realized the reason for his speed. He knew that the man was Khidr (pbuh). He slowly approached him, held his arm and said that:

- If you do not promise me that you will come to this mosque in every prayer

time, I will shout and tell everyone here that you are Khidr.

Khidr apologized and stated that it was impossible for him to come for every prayer time. Sultan Beyazıd had no intention to leave Khidr without getting a promise from him. In the end, they reached an agreement that he would perform one prayer in every week in this mosque. From that day on, it has been believed that Khidr comes to perform one prayer in every week to Beyazıd Mosque. According to the narrations, he performs his prayer somewhere around the red-girdled minaret. (Osman Nuri Topbas, *Abide Şahsiyetleri ve Meseleleriyle Osmanlı*, p. 139) □





## SULTAN SELIM MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYA



An American professor of education Dr. Rufi, who was invited to Turkey for an occasion, told us during our conversation:

“We, Americans would be willing to give a great amount of wealth just to have one century of your history.” (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Tarih ve Tasavvuf Sohbetleri*, p. 260)

### SULTAN SELIM MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYAH

This mosque and its kulliyah are within the borders of Sultan Selim district in the county of Fatih. It was constructed by Suleiman the Magnificent between the years of 1516 and 1522 in the name of his father, Yavuz Sultan Selim. Identity of its architect is not definitely known. Although there were a soup kitchen, a tomb, a bathhouse and a primary school in the kulliyah, unfortunately the soup kitchen and the bathhouse could not survive until this day.

It has a square shape plan and a very simple architecture. It has two minarets and each of them has only one balcony (*sharafa*). It is possible to see gorgeous examples of carving and nacre embroidery on the leaves of the mosque door.

Tiles used for ornamentation of the windows in the courtyard of the mosque are among the most beautiful samples of that period. In the middle of the courtyard, there is a small domed shadirwan placed upon eight marble pillars. On both sides of the mosque, some chambers were built for imam and muezzin.

There are three tombs in the barred graveyard (*khazira*), situated towards the direction of qiblah. In one of the tombs, Yavuz Sultan Selim is buried. In the other, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent's sons and the daughters, who died at a young age, are buried. As to the third tomb, it belongs to Sultan Abdülmecid.





The tomb that belongs to Yavuz Sultan Selim is a work of art befitting to his honor. The gate, window lids and nacre embroidery of the wooden rails of the tomb are wonderful. There is a robe (kaftan), covering the sarcophagus of Yavuz Sultan Selim. The following story narrated about this robe is exemplary:

### **It is an Honor for Me!**

Egypt Campaign was the longest imperial campaign that a ruler joined throughout the history of the Ottoman Empire. After Egypt was conquered, on its way back to Istanbul the army was caught in a heavy rain at the outskirts of Adana. The entire place turned into a mud sea. They decided to spend the night in the neighborhood. On the fol-

lowing day, they continued their way. On his way, Sultan Selim was conversing with one of the greatest scholars of the time, Kemal Pashazade. Just then, Kemal Pashazade's horse staggered and some mud splattering from the feet of the horse stained the sultan's robe. Thinking that it was his fault, Kemal Pashazade felt noticeably ashamed. In order to save this great scholar from being ashamed, Yavuz Sultan Selim said to his servants:

- Bring me a new robe, and do not clean the mud off this robe! The mud that splattered from the feet of the horse of a scholar is valuable for us. When I die, cover my coffin with this robe. (Osman Nuri Topbaş, *Abide Şahsiyetleri ve Müesseseleriyle Osmanlı*, p.158-159) □

## ŞEHZADE MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYA



A French Jew named Prost responded to a Turkish engineer who told him that he was wrong in his choice of the Unkapanı - Sarachane route saying, “I know that I am wrong, but should I have showed you Şehzade Mosque, leaving the Byzantine work of Valens Cove (Bozdogan) and the wonderful part of the Roman work of Fil damı behind?” Aren’t these words sad but at the same time good examples making our unawareness manifest on whom we rely and from whom we ask for help? (Samiha Ayverdi, *İki Aşına*, p.189)



### ŞEHZADE MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYAH

There are three famous works of Mimar Sinan. Şehzade Mosque and Süleymaniye Mosque are very close to each other. The third one Selimiye Mosque is located in Edirne. Mimar Sinan himself commented about these three works as such:

- Şehzade Mosque is the work of my apprenticeship, Süleymaniye is the work of my semiskilled times, and Selimiye, on the other hand, is the work of my mastery.

Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent had this mosque constructed in the name of his very beloved son, Şehzade Mehmed who died at his young age. Mimar Sinan started its construction in 1543 with the command of the ruler and completed it in 1548. This mosque is the first salatin mosque and kulliyah constructed by Mimar Sinan. In the Kulli-

yah, there is a madrasa, a guesthouse, a school, a soup kitchen and some tombs.

Dome of the mosque is 19 m in diameter. Its height is 37 m. The greatest dome supported by four half domes was placed upon four pillars called elephant-feet.

Each one of the minarets of Şehzade Mosque has two balconies (*sharafa*), which distinguish the mosque from all other salatin mosques in Istanbul. Embroidery on its minarets' facade is unique to this mosque.

The pulpit, the niche (*mihrab*) and the place for muezzin (*mahfil*) in the mosque are very precious pieces of art.

There are five tombs in total in the kulliyah of the mosque. One of the tombs that belong to Şehzade Mehmed is one of the most gorgeous tombs in Istanbul.






### ISTANBUL, THE SEVEN HILLS

The statement that “Istanbul has seven hills” is very common among the public. When you look at today’s Istanbul, it may surprise you that there are many hills everywhere. You may wonder about “which these seven hills are.” However, today’s Istanbul is very different from how it was in the Ottoman period. When you talk about ‘Istanbul’ during the Ottoman State, it only meant the region remaining within the ramparts. Districts such as Besiktas, Uskudar, Beykoz etc. were not within the borders of Istanbul.

Therefore, it is necessary for us to find out the seven hills, on which Istanbul was established, within the ramparts:

- 
1. First hill is the place on which Topkapı Palace is situated.
  2. Second hill is the place on which Nuru Osmaniye Mosque is situated.
  3. Third hill is the place on which Süleymaniye Mosque is situated.
  4. Fourth hill is the place on which Fatih Mosque is situated.
  5. Fifth hill is the place on which Sultan Selim Mosque is situated.
  6. Sixth hill is the place on which Edirnekapı Mihrimah Sultan Mosque is situated.
  7. Seventh hill is the place on which Kocamustafapasa district is located.



## SULEYMANIYE MOSQUE



There is no one who has not seen the Süleymaniye during early hours in the morning, when it shines under the sunlight. Go there once again at such early times of the day and contemplate in front of it. You will see how that huge heavy building is lightened by the turrets and the half-domes that support each other and lighten the other's burden; and how it settles on the ground with such an elegant touch. It knows how to be powerful without being harsh and knows how to be a building without looking like a stone. You cannot see any of its ornamentation from a distance... Is it possible that Hasan of Ulubat who went up to the bastions of Constantinople has ornament? (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Devlet ve Devlet Terbiyesi*, p.298-299)



## SÜLEYMANIYE MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYAH

It has been constructed by Mimar Sinan upon the command of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent between the years of 1500 and 1557.

Süleymaniye is symmetrical and centered kulliyah just like Kulliyah of Fatih. There are madrasas, a guesthouse, a hospital, a mental hospital, some tombs, a bathhouse, markets and a primary school around the mosque situated at the center.

Kulliyah of Süleymaniye is one of the masterpieces of a civilization. The mosque has been constructed during the golden age of the Ottoman State. Sultan Suleyman is its benefactor, while Mimar Sinan is the architect of this masterpiece. His work is an architectural brilliance

displaying the whole magnificence of the civilization.

Süleymaniye Mosque came into existence as a result of a worksite organization that could not be easily seen throughout the history. Construction materials used for the mosque were brought from across the Ottoman lands. One of the four pillars found in the mosque was brought from Alexandria, the other one was brought from Baalbek by ships. The third one was brought from Saray-ı Amire (Imperial Palace), the fourth one was brought from Column of Marcian (Kiztashi). These four pillars, which symbolize the Four Caliphs, are 9.02 m in height and 1.14 m in diameter. Their approximate weight is between 40 - 50 tons.





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### A Noble Dream

A very nice story related to the construction of the mosque has been narrated:

Reportedly, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent saw the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in his dream in the night that he decided to start the construction of the mosque. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) gave him some instructions about where and how the mosque was going to be constructed.

In the morning, Sultan excitedly woke up. And the first thing he did was to call the chief architect Sinan to the current location of the mosque. He asked him to build a mosque there. Chief architect Sinan immediately started to talk about the details of the mosque project as if he had been expecting such an order:

- O my sultan! We shall construct the mosque on this place, in such and such way. Its sanctuary will be here, its pulpit will be there and the lectern will be over there.

Sultan realized that description of Sinan was the same as the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) described to him. Looking at Sinan with a meaningful smile Sultan said that:

- O chief architect! You seem to be informed.

Chief architect Sinan bashfully bowed his head down and gave the following respond indicating that he had seen the same dream:

- My dear sultan! I was just behind you (in the dream). (Osman Nuri Topbas, *Abide Şahsiyetleri ve Müesseseleriyle Osmanlı*, pp. 381-382)

White marbles used in the construction have been brought from Marmara Island and the green marbles were brought from Arabia. Over three thousand workers were employed in the construction. However, the number changed depending upon the seasons.

They even created specific working conditions for the animals used in the worksite of the mosque. The workers employed in the construction were paid on time; nobody was treated unjustly, and even the animals carrying loads were seeing just treatment. Working hours and resting hours of the animals were written in a working contract. Their food and water were not neglected, and the animals were never forced to carry any burden over their capacity.

Unlike other mosques, the minarets of the Süleymaniye are not attached to the mosque. They are placed on the corners of the courtyard. The ratio between the minarets and the dome is the result of a perfect brilliance. Two of the minarets has three balconies and they are 76 m, and each one of the other two minarets has two balconies and they are 56 m in height. The dome which is 26.5 m in diameter and its height from the ground is approximately 50 m. The minarets present a wonderful ratio and symmetry.

Dimensions of the mosque are 59 m by 58 m. Having almost a square plan, the mosque has 3500 m<sup>2</sup> interior space.

Four minarets of the mosque indicate that Sultan Suleiman is the fourth Ottoman ruler after the conquest of Is-





tanbul. Ten balconies of the minarets indicate that he is the tenth Ottoman ruler.

The bigger dome of the mosque is supported by two semi-domes. Internal acoustic of the mosque was excellently planned through the cubes that were placed on the inner walls of the bigger dome. Spider webs are prevented by the ostrich eggs placed between the candles of the mosque.

When we think about that oil lamps and candles were used for interior lighting in those times, we can understand the enormity of people's problem of how easily the internal walls of the mosque got blacken from the fumes in a few months. Mimar Sinan found a solution for this problem. Thanks to the air cir-

culatation system he established in the mosque, soot coming from approximately four thousand candles and oil lamps were gathered in "the soot room" which was placed on top of the main entrance of the mosque.

The mosque is like a showroom in which our traditional arts are displayed. Its marble pulpit and sanctuary are masterpiece of carving. Colored windows upon the sanctuary named Shahper-i Jibril (Wings of Gabriel) are uniquely gorgeous. Calligraphies of the mosque were written by Ahmed Shams al-Din Karahisari, one of the masters of calligraphy of the time. Reportedly, for he had gotten blind while he was writing calligraphy of the dome, the rest of the work was completed by his pupil Hasan Çelebi.



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This huge kulliyah cost 896,380 florins, in other words 537 loads and 82,900 silver coins (1 load was equal to 100.000 silver coins). According to a recent calculation, today's cost of the mosque is approximately 900 million dollars and the total cost of the kulliyah is about 3 billion dollars.

When construction of the mosque was completed, everybody who saw it admired the mosque. Displaying an example of a great humility, Sultan Suleiman offered the chief architect to open the mosque to worship which he had constructed. Mimar Sinan responded this kind gesture of the ruler saying:

- My sultan! Penman Shams al-Din Karahisari sacrificed his eyes for the sake of writing calligraphies of the mosque. Give this honor to him!

The mosque was opened to worship with prayers and tears mixed with the sounds of "amin."

There are two tombs in barred graveyard of the mosque. In one of these tombs, Sultan's wife Hurrem Sultan is buried. In the other, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, his daughter Mihrimah Sultan, Sultan Suleiman II and Sultan Ahmed II are buried.

There is a small tomb on the corner of Kulliyah of Süleymaniye, which is close to the Office of Mufti of Istanbul. This tomb belongs to Mimar Sinan. Just as a humble signature signed under a great masterpiece, it was appended to a corner of the Kulliyah.



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### Minaret of Jawahir (Jewelries)

Soon after the construction started, Mimar Sinan stopped the construction of the mosque and started to build the other parts of the kulliyah. For this reason, completion of the mosque was delayed for a while. By that time, most parts of the mosque had been completed and only the construction of the dome was left. Because of his old age, Sultan Süleiman desired to see the mosque to be completed and opened to worship before his death.

In the meantime, some people who were jealous of Mimar Sinan were spreading rumors against him. Because the mosque was being constructed such a huge building, they were arguing whether its dome would collapse or not.

Whereas Mimar Sinan thought that he should wait for a while to give time

for the foundations completely settle, because the slightest change in balance of the foundations after the construction of the dome would not be good for the sake of the mosque.

While everyone was speculating about the mosque, the original rumors lost many things from their essence during the elapsed months until it finally reached at Persia.

It was informed to the Persian ruler that the Ottoman Empire had started to construct a great place of worship and stopped its construction for they had no money left in their treasure to continue the construction.

Persian Shah, who was in a constant competition with the Ottoman State, finally caught the opportunity which he had been expecting. Shah Tahmasb, pretending as a friend, sent his offers for

help (!) via his ambassador. He prepared a jewelry chest full of precious jewels and stones and sent it to Sultan Suleiman by his ambassador. When Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent listened to the words of Persian Shah from his ambassador, he became very angry for the humiliation and degrading the reputation and honor of the state so much. He gave his final and conclusive order to Mimar Sinan: "Finish the mosque at the soonest possible date."

What happened to the treasure sent from Persia? Sultan Suleiman did not reject the help. He distributed some of the stones to the people around him in front of the Persian ambassador. Sultan Suleiman said: "These stones sent by Shah are worthless compared to the stones of the mosque." By his command, the rest of the jewels remained in the chest, like emeralds, rubies and diamonds were pulverized

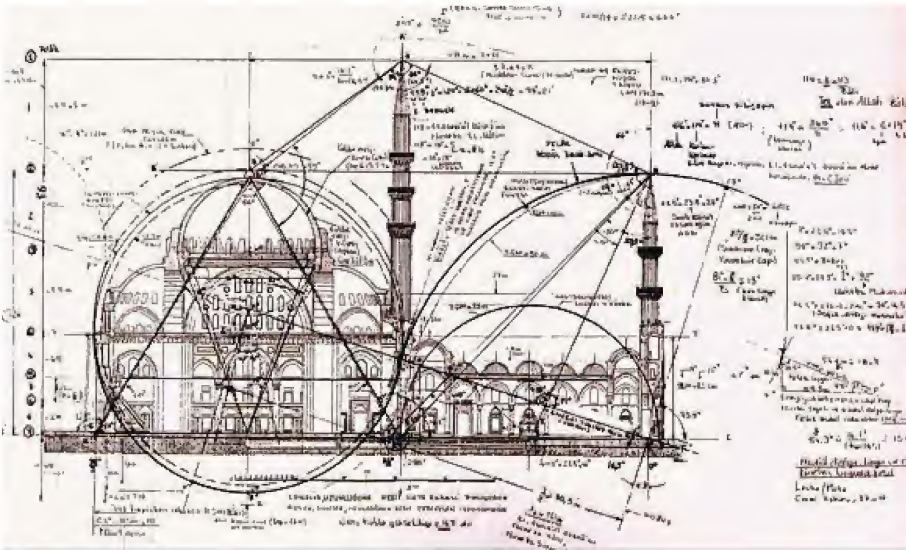
in a muller and mixed with the plaster of a minaret that continued to be constructed.

When sunshine reflects, it can be easily distinguished from the others with its shine. That is why this minaret was called Jawahir (Jewels) Minaret among the public.

### One More Gift

Reportedly, in those days, while construction of the mosque was continuing, one of Frankish kings sent a precious granite stone as a gift wishing that it would be used in the most beautiful place of the mosque.

The expert architect was not happy with this surprise gift, sent without any reason by the king of a country who does not have any tolerance to Islam. He wondered what would come out under this behavior and had the stone divided down in the middle. Stonemasons saw





that there was a cross, graved in a special way in the stone. Sinan who became very angry about that wiliness gave a wise respond. The stone was used for construction of the mosque. It was put on the threshold before one of three gates. Therefore, the believers who come to pray would walk over it when entering the mosque through the courtyard.

### **The Skewed Minaret**

After the construction of Süleymaniye Mosque was completed, the day when it was going to be opened to worship was announced to the public. When the opening day came, people from all parts of Istanbul flocked to that point of the city in order to attend opening of this

unique piece. Everyone was admiringly watching this Turkish masterpiece. However, a child among them was shouting:

-Wow! Look at that minaret, how skewed!

Everyone was looking, but nobody was seeing any skew.

Words of the child about the skew of a minaret reached to Sinan. Great Architect came to him and said:

- My little one, show me which minaret is skewed.

The child showed one of the minarets saying that "Here, it is!" Mimar Sinan immediately gathered his work-





ers. They tied long ropes to each other and attached them to the minaret. They started to pull with his command “Pull it up!” Then he said to the child:

- My son, look, I have this minaret straightened. Be careful; inform me when it becomes straight.

Workers were pulling it, as they were really straightening. After a while, the child shouted, “Okay, now it is straight.” Workers stopped pulling and untied the ropes. One of his workers who witnessed this incident from the beginning posed the question that had on everyone’s mind to Mimar Sinan:

- Our noble chief architect, you know best that there was no skew on the minaret. Then, why did you attempt to straighten it?

Response of Mimar Sinan was a symbol of grace, sensibility and tolerance:

- Do I not know that there was no skewness on the minaret? However, I could not leave this impression of “the skewed minaret” on the mind of a child. Therefore, I used this method to clean the thought of “a skewed minaret” from the mind of the child. Otherwise, he would talk about a skewed minaret everywhere with his childish mind, and the rumor that the minaret was skewed



would spread among people. (Suleyman Faruk Goncuoglu, Zeliha Kumbasar, *Gelenekten Geleceğe Camiler*, p.180-181)

### Endowments of the Mosque and Kulliyah

After Süleymaniye Mosque was completed, in order to meet its expenses, the income from 271 foundations consisting 217 villages, 2 districts, 30 hamlets, 5 village products, 7 mills, 2 fish farms, 2 seaports, 1 meadowland, 2 farms, 2 islands and 1 share was donated to the mosque.

### Mosque Must Be Like This

After the mosque was opened to worship, it was put into service with a great team consisting 275 people. Duties of these people were as follows:

A person to preach to people on Fridays and on other sacred days and nights (*waiz*)

A person to give sermon in Friday prayer and the festival prayers and to lead the prayer (*khatib*)

2 Imams and 24 muezzins to carry out their duties in turn

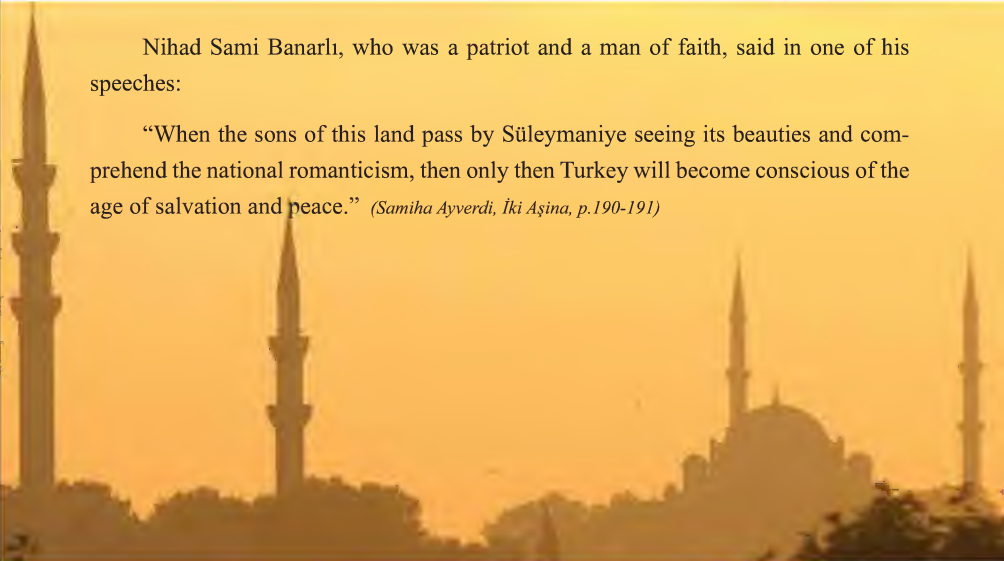
10 People to recite a certain part from Qur'an (*ashr-i sharif*), and a person to sing hymns and recite eulogium (*qasidah*) and a person to say supplications out loud

120 People to recite parts from the Qur'an following the noon and afternoon prayers, 4 people to distribute parts of the Qur'an to the people who will recite them and gather them back again, 2 people to supervise all these duties, 2 people to protect Noble Qur'an.

41 people who know the entire Qur'an by heart to recite chapter al-An'am (5) every day.

Nihad Sami Banarlı, who was a patriot and a man of faith, said in one of his speeches:

"When the sons of this land pass by Süleymaniye seeing its beauties and comprehend the national romanticism, then only then Turkey will become conscious of the age of salvation and peace." (*Samiha Ayverdi, İki Aşına*, p.190-191)



20 People to recite 3500 times statements of Tawhid (kalimah al-tawhid) “La ilaha illAllah: There is no god but Allah” after the Dawn Prayer, 10 people to recite 1000 salawats or the statement of “Allahumma salli ala Muhammad: O Allah bestow peace upon Muhammad”

6 People to perform 20 cycles of supererogatory prayers and say supplications every day

3 people to recite chapters of Yasin, al-Mulk (Tabareke) and al-Naba’ (Amma) after the Dawn Prayer

A person to burn incense in the mosque

10 people to carry out the cleaning services, 8 people to light and blow out oil lamps and candles punctually

4 People to clean the garden, 2 porters and 1 gardener...

### What Kind of a Person Are You?

It is a Turkish proverb: “Donkey dies, its saddle remains...Man dies, his work remains...”

When a person wonders and investigates “what Mimar Sinan left behind” the following list is found:

84 mosques, 52 prayer houses, 57 madrasas, 7 centers of Qur’an education (dar al-qurra), 22 tombs, 17 guesthouses and soup kitchens (imarethane), 3 hospitals (darushshifa), 6 aqueducts, 8 bridges, 20 caravansaries, 35 palaces, 3 cisterns and 41 bath houses...

There is a total of 360 pieces not only in Istanbul but scattered around the whole Ottoman geography... □



**THE FEAST MORNING IN SÜLEYMANIYE**

In every second, the light of my heart, increasing  
In Süleymaniye was dawning a great morning

Under our own dome at this festival hour  
From all of its nine centuries, all people, the entire country

From place to place reflecting from the blue landscape,  
The dusty curtain of time always rises up

Since the moment the night tended to end  
The thing heard is flaps in the sky, steps on the land

There is an arrival! How sacred, how strange this universe is  
Air is thoroughly filled with thousands of spirits

This arrival from all horizons is from the ancient campaigns  
Of the many places conquered by those campaigns

As light and darkness get mixed in this silence  
Human and ghost, mixed, are walking without a cease

Some from the sky, some from the earth swarming through every entrance  
One after another entering into this divine edifice

This Temple of God is filled from all directions  
Süleymaniye becomes history at these hours

The most fighting, the most arduous of all military-nations  
Has dedicated to Allah, such an edifice

To make it the most beautiful temple of the last religion  
This is the epitome dreamed by the architecture

To allow it to see the eternity better than everywhere  
He chose this sacred hill on the skyline of Istanbul,

Together with veterans and commanders, he carried its plaster  
Prevailed over the stones by thousands of architects and workers



To both day and night of this free and immense abode  
 From here, he opened to the sky a spiritual door  
 So that the armies of the souls would reach at the eternal mercy  
 A soldier is the architect of this temple of victory  
 Great temple! I just understand you this morning  
 Today, I am proud of being one of your inheritor  
 Once, I thought it was just a monument of geometry  
 Now, while under your dome looking at the community  
 Whom I have seen in my dreams and missed for years  
 I am like entering to the abode of the ancestors' grace  
 A mass of same language, same heart, same faith  
 Seeing that their being gathered in one place  
 When everybody calls the Almighty Allah in one voice  
 Many takbirs with thousands of waves transform into one voice  
 Growing excitement of a rising chorus  
 Many thousands of horse manes mixed with many plumes!  
 I saw a man in uniform, sitting in the first row  
 Listening to the repeated takbirs in elated bliss  
 How pure the face of that soldier was  
 Who was he? Was he the constructor or the architect of this great piece?  
 ...  
 In this great temple, I joined in the unity of nation  
 Many praises are to God, I saw again,  
 The souls standing along with the livings  
 In this feast morning, my heart is full of bliss

Yahya Kemal Beyatlı

## SULTANAHMET (BLUE) MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYA



Wherever Turkish architectural monuments have been constructed, they have been built there in accordance with nature of the land, as if that monument were placed there by the hand of the Great Creator when the world was created, and it stands stately in coherence with the nature. (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Devlet ve Devlet Terbiyesi*, p.81)

### SULTANAHMET (BLUE) MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYAH

This mosque, constructed opposite Hagia Sophia, so to say, is competing with its beauty and magnificence. It has been constructed by an architect named Sedefkar Mehmet Aga with the command of Sultan Ahmet I. Construction of the mosque and kulliyah started in 1609. Sultan Ahmet I, his beloved Sufi master Aziz Mahmud Hudayi, Shaykh al-Islam Mehmet Effendi, Sadrazam (Grand Vizier) Davud Pasha and some great statesmen themselves physically worked in the construction of the mosque.

The mosque was opened to worship in 1617, while its kulliyah was not completed until the year 1619.

Kulliyah of Sultanahmet is one of the biggest kulliyahs of Istanbul. It consists of a mosque, madrasas, Sultan pavilion (*qasr*), bazaar, shopping centers, bathhouse, fountain, tomb, hospital, primary school, soup kitchen and rooms for rent, however unfortunately some of these sections did not survive to this day.



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Ground clearance of the dome, which is 23.5 m in diameter, is 43 meters. Four elephant legs - each one of them is 5m in diameter - hold this huge dome standing. The main dome is also supported by four semi-domes. Two hundred and sixty windows decorated with colored glasses provide a unique interior lightening to the mosque.

Sultanahmet Mosque has been called “Blue Mosque” by foreigners because of its more than twenty thousand tiles used for interior decoration of the mosque and the shades of blue used in the patterns on these tiles.

The greatest characteristic of Sultanahmet Mosque is that it has six minarets. It preserved to be the only mosque with six minarets in Turkey until a replica of it (Sabancı Central Mosque) was constructed in Adana.

Sultan Ahmet I added a 7<sup>th</sup> minaret to Magnificent Ka’bah, which had been the only mosque with six minarets until that time, in order to make it superior to the Sultanahmet mosque.

Nacre ornamented gate and window lids, marble engravings on the pulpit and sanctuary, hand-carved ornamentations





of the mosque increase the elegance and beauty of the mosque.

Another characteristic of Sultanahmet Mosque is to have a Sultan Pavilion. Sultan Ahmet I was one of the most pious Ottoman sultans. Before and after the prayers he would retire in Sultan Pavilion, which was constructed next to the mosque in the outer court of the kulliyah. It is reported that leaving Topkapı Palace he would go into seclusion there for 10 days at the end of the month of Ramadan.

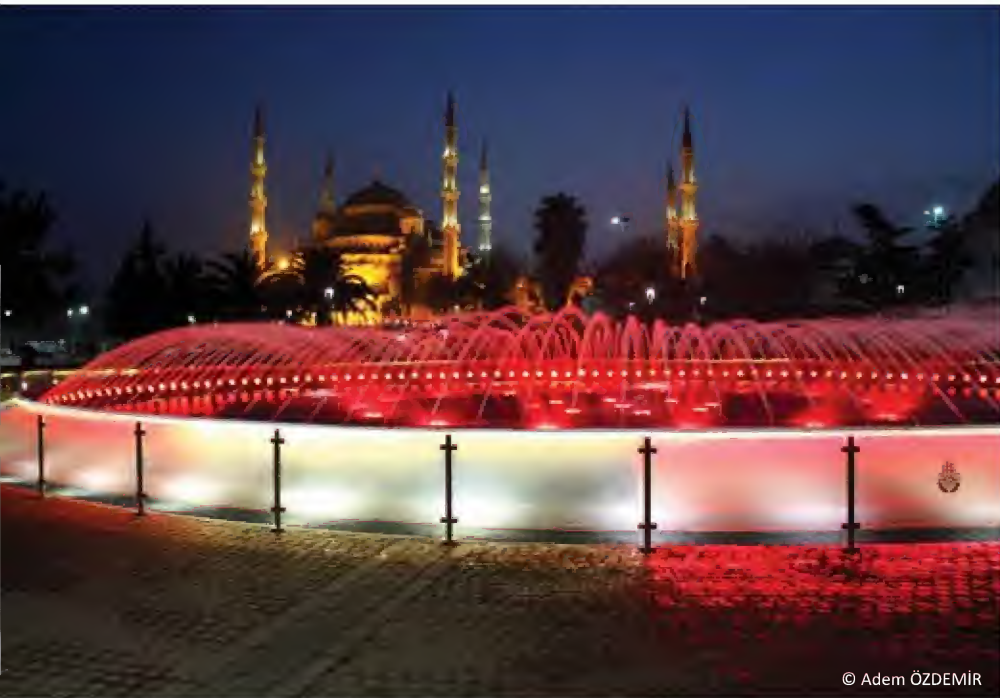
Sultan Ahmet I, his wife Kosem Sultan, his sons, Sultan Osman II and

Sultan Murat IV and his some grandsons are buried in a tomb constructed in the kulliyah. Around the tomb, there is a madrasa that is currently used as the Prime Ministry Archive Storage.<sup>1</sup> Hospital and soup kitchen of the kulliyah currently serve as Sultanahmet Technical High School.

### Paradise is His Place

The following incident is reported about the spiritual aspects of this blessed mosque.

1. This storage was moved to another district called Kagithane in the summer of 2013 (translator)



Sultan Ahmet I ascended to the throne when he was 14 years old and passed away when he was 28. Years after his death, his daughter Gevher Hatun saw him in a dream. He was in Paradise in a magnificent state. In her dream, she wonderingly asked her father:

- Dad, through which of your deeds did you earn this wonderful position?

Sultan Ahmet responded his daughter saying:

- My daughter, I had carried stones on my back when I had this mosque constructed. Therefore, my Lord forgave my sins and bestowed me this position. (Osman Nuri Topbas, *Abide Şahsiyetleri ve Müesseseleriyle Osmanlı*, p.193)

### Lawsuit in the Presence of the Prophet

Another incident reported about Sultanahmet Mosque is as follows:

Construction of the mosque was continuing. Footprint of the Prophet (pbuh) which had been found in the tomb of Mamluk Sultan Kayıtbay in Egypt was brought to Istanbul with the command of Sultan Ahmet I. Sultan thought that when the construction of the mosque was completed, footprint of the Prophet (pbuh) would be displayed there, which would attract more people to come to the mosque and perform their prayers...



Footprint of the Prophet (pbuh) which was brought to Istanbul had been temporarily placed in the tomb of Aba Ayyub al-Ansari until the construction of the mosque was completed. However, soon after that, Sultan saw a dream. In his dream, the Prophet (pbuh) was a judge, Sultan Kayıtbay was a plaintiff. Sultan Kayıtbay was complaining about Sultan Ahmet I. In the dream, the Prophet (pbuh) judged by the return of his honored footprint to its original place. Sultan Ahmet I woke up from the dream in cold sweat. Upon this dream, he decided to return to the blessed footprint of the Prophet (pbuh) to its original place. However, he was not willing to leave Istanbul devoid from the blessings of the Prophet's (pbuh) footprint. Thus, its several copies were made. One of them was placed in Tomb of Eyüp Sultan. The other one is currently in the tomb of Abdulhamit I. Another one is preserved in Topkapı Palace. He had made one more copy for himself. This one was a tiny one. Sultan used to wear this tiny footprint as a crest. Sultan Ahmet used to wear this crest during the festivals, holy days and nights such as the Night of Qadr. The following poem was written by the Sultan himself with blue porcelain enamel on this golden crest:

If only I had always carried on my head  
The blessed footprint of the king of the  
prophets

Owner of this footprint is the most beautiful  
rose in the garden of the prophet-  
hood

O Ahmet! Do not stop; rub your face to  
the footprint of that Rose ■











ISTANBUL

SULTANAHMET

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## NEW MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYA



Architectural monuments are not temporary works. It is in our control not to read a bad poem, not to listen to a terrible music, not to look at an unpleasant picture, or not to watch a banal dance. However, unpleasantness, hybridity, alienism, and inappropriateness of an architectural work, which stands everyday on our way, might be an unhealable sore. (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Istanbul'a Dair*, p.106)

### NEW MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYAH

New Mosque occupies a unique place among the salatin mosques with its story of construction. Its construction was started in 1597 in the name of the Sultan Murad III's wife, Safiya Sultan. Architect of the mosque Davut Aga left the task of its construction to Dalgıç Ahmad Aga in 1598. The construction, which continued until 1603 left unfinished with the Sultan Ahmad I's ascension to the throne. This building, which had been left to its fate, waited more than fifty years for the day that it became a mosque. In 1661, Sultan Mehmet IV was on the Ottoman throne. Sultan's mother, Khadijah Turhan Sultan, extended her helping hand to this half-finished place of worship. The construction of the building, which was taken over by Ar-

chitect Mustafa Aga, was completed and opened to worship in 1663.

The main dome, which is 17.5 m in diameter and 36 m in height, stands on four elephant legs ornamented by tiles and supported by four semi-domes. The mosque has two minarets each one of which has three balconies.

The kulliyah consists of a primary school, a fountain, a public fountain, sultan pavilion and a tomb. However, the primary school unfortunately could not survived to this day.

Most of the Ottoman mosques are composed of an inner court and an outer court that encircles the inner court. New Mosque also had an outer court, but it was destroyed during the projects of street expansion. The inner court of the





mosque is encircled by 21 domes that stand upon 18 pillars. In the middle of the court, there is a beautiful shadirwan (water fountain to perform ablution).

The sultan pavilion, which is located near the mosque and was built for Khadijah Turhan Sultan, is one of the most brilliant examples of the classical Turkish home architecture. The sultan pavilion on the one hand watches over the Golden Horn and its ridges; and on the other hand, it has a wonderful view overlooking Bosphorus up to Beylerbeyi. The pavilion, which consists of three rooms and a hall, is ornamented by Iznik tiles. Its wooden door and window lids are inlaid by ivory and nacre.

One of the most important features of New Mosque is its tomb. Khadijah Turhan Sultan tomb is one of the biggest tombs of Ottoman Dynasty. There are the graves of five sultans and some of the notable members of the dynasty



in the tomb. In addition to Khadijah Turhan Sultan, Sultan Mehmet IV, Sultan Osman III, Sultan Mustafa II, Sultan Ahmad III and Sultan Mahmut I are buried in this tomb. □



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## HIRKA-I SHARIF MOSQUE AND ITS KULLIYA



In order to raise a nation back to its old days and provide it the continuity befitting to its historical glory, its children must be raised to a level that they can understand, hear and live the language, conscience and faith of their ancestors. (Nihad Sami Banarlı, *Tarih ve Tasavvuf Sohbetleri*, p. 11)

### HIRKA-I SHARIF MOSQUE and ITS KULLIYA

Sultan Abdülmecid built the mosque, which is located in Hirka-i Sharif District of Fatih County in Istanbul, in 1851. This mosque is called Hirka-i Sharif Mosque, because it was constructed for the Noble Prophet's famous mantle, which had been given as a gift to Uwais al-Qarani, in order to protect it and give people a chance to visit there.

The mantle kept in the mosque was taken from Shukrullah Uwaisi, a member of al-Qarani family with an imperial edict issued by Sultan Ahmad I. The mantle, which had been kept in various places, was placed in this mosque after its construction.

The mosque turned into a small kulliyah after the construction of some additional buildings. As part of the building complex, a house was constructed for the oldest member of al-Uwaisi

family, who took over protection and maintenance of the mantle. Additionally, barracks were built for the guards of the blessed mantle of the Prophet (Hirka-i Sharif), and some chambers were constructed for other employees. The building that was constructed as barracks is used today as Hirka-i Sharif Primary School.

The mosque, which was built in the shape of an octagon, has two minarets each one of which has one balcony. The calligraphy boards written by Sultan Abdülmecid himself are also maintained in this mosque.

The blessed mantle of the Prophet is opened for visits everyday between noon and afternoon prayers beginning from the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Ramadan until the Night of Qadr. □

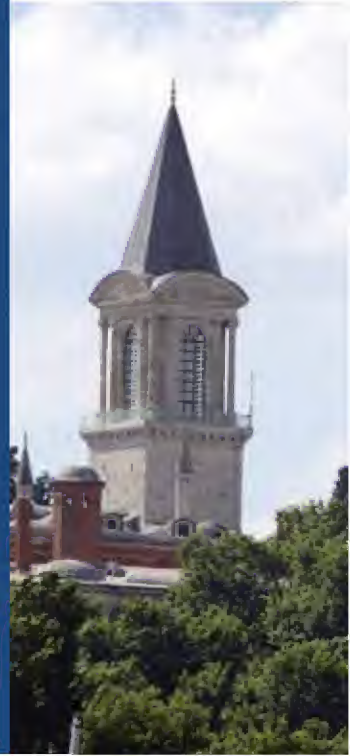


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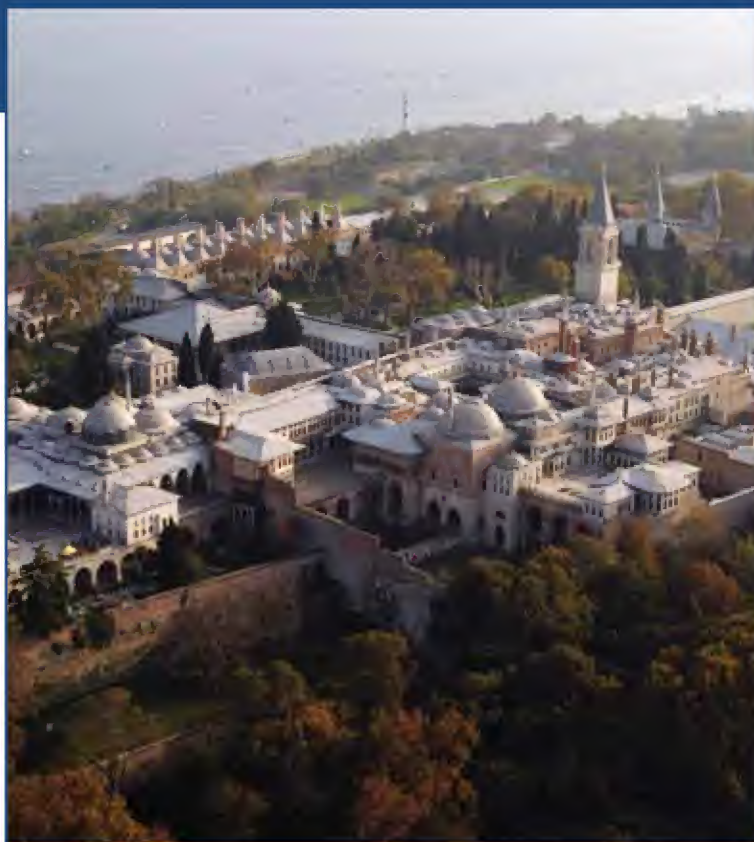


# PALACES

- ❖ TOPKAPI
- ❖ YILDIZ
- ❖ ÇIRAĞAN
- ❖ BEYLERBEYI
- ❖ DOLMABAHÇE



# TOPKAPI PALACE



Neither luxury nor mysterious wealth of interior of the European palaces can be seen in this palace. There is just growth of trees freely like the ones in the wild forests, murmurs of water, singing of pigeons. Several windows in the rooms are always open. The patios are like fly-ing over gardens and seas, and sultans, who sit behind shades in latticed mansions and enjoy from both silence and the magical beauty of Bos-porus. (Alphonse De Lamartine, *Istanbul Yazıları*, p. 127-128)



## TOPKAPI PALACE

Topkapı Palace is a unique one compared to the palaces of other states. According to many historians, the construction of the palace took the longest time among the state palaces. Unlike other state palaces in the world, construction of Topkapı Palace did not start based on a plan, and was not completed in a certain period. Its construction was started in the following years of the conquest of Istanbul, and it turned into a palace complex developed according to the needs of every coming sultan. Because of this feature, some historians compared it to a living organism.

Before this palace, there had been another palace constructed at Beyazıt Square at the spot where Istanbul University is located today. However, in a short span of time, it was understood that this site was not suitable for a state palace, and then the palace, which is found at Sarayburnu today, was constructed.

The first palace is called “Old Palace,” and was used as the residence by the family and children of the sultans who had been deposed or died. The second palace is called “Saray-i Cedid” which means “New Palace.”

There was a wooden palace, named “Topkapusu Coast Palace”, which has been constructed at the time of Sultan Mahmud I on the coast of Sarayburnu. After this palace was destroyed in a fire, the name of “New Palace” was changed into “Topkapı Palace”.

The palace built on the most beautiful part of Istanbul, or a hillock dominating the Golden Horn, Bosphorus and Marmara Sea, lies approximately on 80,000 square meter area today. However, the palace used to be located on a wider place (approximately 700,000 square meter) in its early years. For example, the area, known today as Gülhane Park, was used as the garden of the harem sec-





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tion of the palace. In the same vein, the coast of Sarayburnu was also within the limits of the palace before construction of the railroad.

The last addition to the palace, which started to be constructed by Fatih Sultan Mehmed between the years of 1456 and 1478, was made by Sultan Abdülmecid with the addition of Mecidiye Mansion. Topkapı Palace became the center for one of the greatest states of the world for approximately four hundred years that passed between these two sultans. The heart of a 24,000,000 square km world state beat there.

The remarks of Murat Belge, one of our famous historians, is very noteworthy:

“The Ottoman Palace was constructed with the consciousness of the sense of humbleness. The palace is mostly horizontal. The patterns of splendor, which is symbolized by high walls, was avoided. The size of many mosques in Istanbul was intentionally chosen to be big for they are the houses of Allah. However, in this respect, the sultans avoided building their residence in ostentatious styles. For this reason, Topkapı Palace is humbler in form compared to the palaces we see in Europe, and do not like the popular images of splendor of the Orient. They may also have people say, “Is this the great Ottoman palace?” (Murat Belge, *Istanbul Gezi Rehberi*, p. 38)



Topkapı Palace lost its characteristic to be the state palace after the construction of Dolmabahçe Palace. It was turned into a museum on 9 October 1924.

Topkapı Palace can be visited every day of the week between 10:00-17:00 o'clock except Tuesdays.

### **Bab-i Humayun (The Sultanate Gate)**

Topkapı Palace has many gates both its land side and the sea side, however, Bab-i Humayun or the Sultanate Gate is its only main gate.

Topkapı Palace is formed from two parts according to its main plan: **Birun** (Outer Palace) and **Enderun** (Inner Palace).

Harem is the separate special section where the sultan lived his family life.

After entering from the Sultanate Gate, the outer palace or “**birun**” section starts. There was a mansion constructed at the time of Sultan Mehmed II over this gate, but this place was burned down in a fire in 1866 and has not survived to this day.

Bab-i Humayun used to be opened with the call to Dawn Prayer and closed after performing the night prayer. Scholars and statesmen who came to the palace could enter from this gate and go by the middle gate on their horses.

The bodies of the statesmen who abused their duties, oppressed the society,





and the rebels who revolted against the state used to be displayed here after their execution to be a lesson to the public.

### **The First Courtyard (The Regiment Square)**

Entering from the Sultanate Gate means actually entering Topkapı Palace. This is the first courtyard of the palace. In this courtyard, there were some service buildings of the palace (e.g. mint, hospital, bakery, armory etc.) and dorms where the servants of the palace resided. Common people could also enter to this courtyard on certain days of week to deliver their complaints and requests.

After the first courtyard, there is a 300 meter-long road both side of which is covered by plane trees stretching up to the second gate of the palace called Babu's-Selam (the Gate of Greetings).

This road witnessed the ceremonies of new sultans' accession to the throne (*cülus*), the ceremonies organized for the foreign ambassadors hosted in the palace and other types of state ceremonies. On the left side of this road, there were the mint, storehouses, which provided the palace's need for wood, palace stable, bathhouses, which provided services to the servants of the palace, and dorms. However, these buildings could not survive to this day. On right side of the road, there were Enderun hospital, ministry of finance, bakeries, which produced bread and bagels for the palace, and the dorms where servants of this part resided.

Bab-i Humayun and the first courtyard of the palace used to be guarded by the soldiers under the command of Bos-tancıbaşı (the commander of the palace guards).





### Hagia Irene Church

This building, which is one of the oldest churches of Istanbul, is a monument going back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

It is one of the first churches of East Roman Empire. Hagia Irene means “**Holy Peace**”. It was built in memory of **Irene of Hungary (Saint Irene)** who contributed to the spread of Christianity among Romans.

It was not converted to a mosque during the Ottoman period. After the period of Sultan Mehmet II, it was used as a storage facility for the spoils of wars and a type of arsenal to store some of the weaponry.

When you approach to the middle gate, you would see a fountain near the wall on the right side of the road. This is **the Fountain of Executioner (Cellat Çeşmesi)**. The fountain was given this name because the hangmen used to wash

their hands and cleavers at this fountain after executing the capital punishment. The rock in front of it, which looks like a column, is called “the warning rock” on which severed heads of criminals used to be displayed.





### **The Second Courtyard and Babu's-Selam (The Gate of Greetings)**

Babu's-Selam (the Middle Gate) is the second gate of the palace after Bab-i Humayun. Towers on two sides of the gate were built during the period of **Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent**.

When you enter through this gate, you would find yourself at the center of administration of Ottoman Empire. Entering through this gate on horseback and riding in this courtyard was a right given only to Ottoman sultans. This part of the palace beginning from the gate used to be guarded by Kapıkulu Soldiers (Janissaries). Another name of this yard is "Divan (Council) Square." Payment of the salaries (ulufe) of the janissaries,

ceremonies organized for foreign envoys, and festival celebrations used to be carried out in this square. The most spectacular one among these ceremonies was "*cülus* Ceremony" by which new sultan ascended to the throne. The golden throne used during festival celebrations used to be taken from the treasure and placed to its special place under fringes of Babu's-Sa'adah.

When the sultan did not join a military campaign with the Ottoman army, he used to entrust the Honorable Flag (Sancak-i Serif) to the army commander there.

One can also see the tablet of Sohum Castle in Divanhane Square. Tablet of the castle, which was captured by the

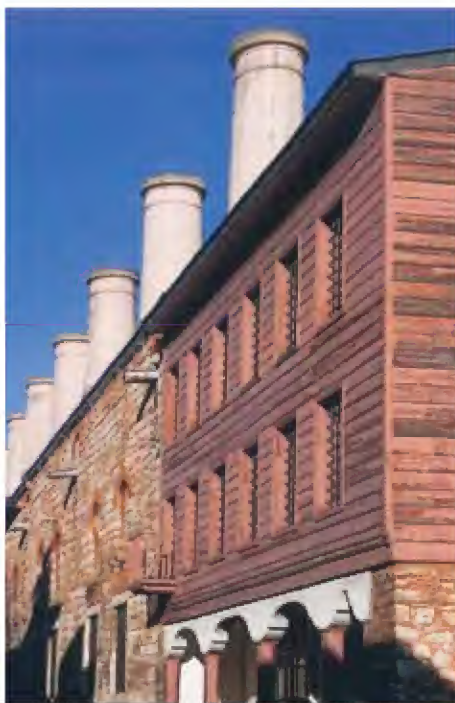


Russians during the Ottoman-Russian War between 1877-1878 (Russo-Turkish War), was removed, brought to Istanbul, and planted in this square to take lesson from it.



### Palace Kitchens

Kitchens of the palace, as it is understood from chimneys on the roof, are found on the right side of the courtyard. Today, the kitchen equipment used in the palace is exhibited in these kitchens. This exhibition is one of the richest the kitchen collections of the world. 2,500 pieces selected out of approximately 12,000 Chinese and Japanese porcelains dated between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are displayed in this exhibition. Istanbul porcelains, silver dinner sets, and European porcelains used in the palace are some other precious pieces of the kitchen collection.





### Divan-ı Humayun or Kubbealtı

Divan-i Humayun is like today's cabinet. Viziers who met there under the presidency of grand vizier used to report their decisions about state administration to sultan after the meeting. Until the time of Sultan Mehmet II, the sultan himself used to attend the divan meetings. This method was abandoned during the period of Sultan Mehmet II. If the sultan wanted, he used to watch the meeting behind the latticed window in divan. Because such meetings used to be conducted in a hall with couches and with a large dome, this place was named "Kubbealtı (the place under the dome)."

Members of divan used to gather on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The divan was formed from the following persons:

Sadrâzam (Prime minister), six viziers, Başdefterdar (Finance Minister), Nişancı (Ministers Responsible for Land Affairs), Ra'isu'l-Kuttab (Minister of Foreign Affairs), head clerk of Divan-i Humayun, kadiaskers of Rumelia and Anatolia (two highest level judges), Kaptanpaşa (Fleet Admiral), Yeniçeri Ağası (Chief of General Staff).

### The Tower of Justice

One of the first buildings coming to mind related to Topkapı Palace is this tower which is 45 m in height. Because Divan-i Humayun was the administrative center of the state, it was also ex-

pected to be the source of justice in the whole country. This tower that is the highest building in the palace representing the superiority of justice over every-





thing is called “**The Tower of Justice.**” Entrance of the tower is in the harem section.

### **The Office of the External Treasury and Weapons Collection**

The name of the large building with eight domes near Divan-i Humayun is “Dış Hazine Dairesi (The Office of the External Treasury).” Official treasure of the state was kept in this building which was built at the time of Sultan Mehmet II. Today, a precious collection composed of the best war equipment selected from approximately 52,000 pieces of weaponry used in the Ottoman army is displayed in this building. It is possible to see in the collection the swords of Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs dating back between 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, weapons of Mamluk sultans dating back to 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, European, Iranian, Crimean and Tatar weapons captured during wars.

Weapons of the greatest Ottoman sultans like Sultan Mehmet II, Beyazıt II, Yavuz Sultan Selim, and Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent are the most precious pieces of this collection.



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### **Babu's-Sa'adah (The Gate of Bliss) and Enderun**

So to speak, the area in which the heart of the Ottoman Palace is beaten starts after this gate. The section that one enters passing through Babu's-Sa'adah is called Enderun area of the palace. Even grand vizier cannot come through this gate without getting called from inside or permission of sultan.

This is special place for sultan to spend time during the day. All people found here are special manservants of sultan.

Behind Babu's-Sa'adah, the large Enderun rooms are found on the right side and small ones are on the left side.

Enderun, at the same time, was a palace school. The most talented young boys selected from all corners

of the country used to be admitted to this school as students. Besides getting the most qualified education across the country, they used to be brought up in this school according to palace manners.

Many high-ranking government officials such as grand viziers, fleet admirals, janissary commanders, sancak governors were educated at this school. Not only statesmen but also many poets, painters, architects and musicians were trained and many scholars of history, science and math got their education at Enderun.

### **Arz Odası (the Sultan's Audience Hall)**

Right after the entry to the third courtyard of Topkapı Palace, a room appears. This is "the Sultan's Audience



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Hall called Arz Odası,” which was built by Fatih Sultan Mehmed.

After divan meetings, Grand Vizier and viziers used to report the decisions taken at the meeting to sultan in this hall. Moreover, when a foreign ambassador came to Ottoman lands, if they were accepted to the presence of the sultan, they would meet sultan in this hall.

During the meetings in Arz Odası, taps on the room walls would be turned on. Melodious sound of water filling the room would prevent what is discussed in the room to be heard outside.

There were some protocols that needed to be followed by the ambassadors. While entering the presence of the

sultan, two of the gatekeepers would hold from the ambassadors' arms. When he got inside, he had to salute the sultan three times in three places. While speaking to sultan, they were not allowed to make eye contact with the sultan and look directly at his face. They could speak looking down to the ground, standing still, and their hands attached in their fronts.

### Library of Sultan Ahmed III

The library built by Sultan Ahmed III is in the building right behind the Sultan's Audience Hall. It was built in 1718 by Sultan Ahmet III who himself was a calligrapher and famous for his passion for books.





Its walls are plated with elegant tiles. Its door leaves and window sashes are among the best examples of Ottoman nacre carving. How beautiful the poem penned by Sultan Ahmed III placed on the wall of the library is:

**“Eşhedü en la ilâhe ilallah  
Yaptım bu makâmı li-merzâtillâh  
Okundukça tefâsîr ü ehâdis  
Şefaattir ümîdim yâ Resûlullâh”**

“I bear witness that there is no god but Allah

I built this place for the sake of Allah

So long as exegesis and sayings of the Prophet are studied in it,

Your intercession is my hope, O Messenger of Allah!”

### **Seferli Koğuşu (The Dormitory of the Expeditionary Force)**

The building located on the right side of the third courtyard is called Seferli Koğuşu. The Dormitory of the Expeditionary Force (Seferli Koğuşu) was originally constructed in 1635 by

Sultan Murat IV. The old Expeditionary Force Ward consisted of the fountain in front of the Sultan’s Hamam, a bath, a small mosque and the actual dormitory. The building was torn down and rebuilt by Sultan Ahmet III in 1719, in the course of the construc-

tion of the Enderûn Library.

Seferli Koğuşu was one of the classes of Enderun School. Students of this class were responsible for the order, cleaning, and tidiness of Enderun. They cleaned the clothes and took care of the laundry of Enderun members.

Today, Ottoman sultans’ clothes are exhibited in this building. One may see in this building the collection of imperial wardrobe that are woven at the palace looms, embroidered with silk, gold, and silver, and are the most valuable examples of their kind.





### The Adornment of Yavuz

Sultan Yavuz lived a simple life. Since he slept little and used to spend his nights by reading book. He used to eat just one kind of dish at every meal in a wooden plate. One day when he saw his son Suleyman well dressed up, he said to him:

- “My son, you adorned yourself so much that you did not leave anything for your mother to wear.”

He used to wear in a very simple way.

-“Dressing ornately and resplendently is nothing but a burden. Why do we bear this burden in vein?” he used to say.

He used to wear a cloth until it wore off. All statesmen had to act in this way. Once, the news arrived that the ambassador of Venice was going to come to Istanbul and visit the sultan. Thereupon, viziers felt the need to change their

clothes and informed Yavuz via grand vizier. Sultan Selim said:

“Yes, it is appropriate.”

On the day of the arrival of the ambassador, all viziers wearing new clothes came to the presence of sultan. However, they could not believe their eyes, because Yavuz had his old clothes on him. He sat in his throne, drew his sharp sword and put on the stairs of the throne. Its glare was dazzling under sunlight coming through the window. In the face of the situation, all viziers were ashamed of their clothes.

After meeting finished and the ambassador went out, Yavuz said to the grand vizier:

- O pasha! Go and ask the ambassador of what he thought about us.

The grand vizier reported impressions of the ambassador:

- My Sultan! Venice ambassador said, “Glare of his sword dazzled me so much that I could not even see the sultan.”

Yavuz smiled, pointed to the sword by his forefinger and said:

- See, so long as our sword blade is sharp, unbelievers cannot take their eyes off it and cannot see us. May Allah forbid, one day if it gets blunt and does not shine, then unbelievers will despise us and look down on us. (Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ, *Abide Şahsiyetleri ve Müesseseleriyle Osmanlı*, p. 162-163)



### Fatih Köşkü (the Mansion of Fatih)

This department was built by Fatih Sultan Mehmed in 1478. It is one of the places having the most beautiful views in the palace.

The most precious pieces of the palace treasury exhibited in the four rooms of the mansion constitute one of the most valuable collections of the world.

While the treasury building in the second courtyard was official treasure of the state, this one was “the Treasury of Enderun.” The share of the sultan from the war spoils would be transferred to this treasury. The valuable presents given to the sultan would also be kept in this building. Both palace expenses and the sultan’s charitable (building mosques, fountain, school etc.) and private expenses used to be covered from this treasury. When the state treasury was short for money because of reasons like war,

the sultan would transfer money from his private treasury to the state treasury. This treasury used to be sealed with **the seal of Yavuz Sultan Selim**. Sultan had the following bequest:

**“Whoever from my predecessors (those who come after me) fills up with mangır (copper money) this treasury which I have filled up with gold, let the treasure be sealed with his seal, otherwise let’s continue to seal it with my seal.”**

The golden throne exhibited in the first room was given to Sultan Murat III as a gift by Ibrahim Pasha. This throne was used by the sultans during the feast celebrations in the following years. Sultan Ahmed I’s throne which was adorned with ivory, nacre and precious jewels is one of the most beautiful examples of wood engraving. Sedefkar Mehmed Agha, the architect of Sultan Ahmet Mosque, was the master of this beautiful piece.



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The throne made from ebony-tree and adorned with ivory and nacre carvings was used by Sultan Murad IV during Baghdad Campaign. Another important piece exhibited in this hall is a throne considered to belong to Shah Ismail. This throne was given to Sultan Mahmud I as a gift by Nadir Shah. Again, plumes adorned with valuable jewels used by the sultans and throne hangers adorned with jewels are kept in this room. In the second room, beautiful Russian-Chinese-Iranian-Indian handicrafts and state medallions are exhibited.

Precious pieces made of jade-stone, zinc, and pebble are exhibited in the third hall. Two big candlesticks found in this room had been made for the grave of the Prophet (pbuh). Each of them is 48 kg solid gold and adorned with diamonds. During the First World War, they were brought to Istanbul in order to be protected against the danger of invasion of Medina.

In the fourth room, ceremonial swords, valuable daggers, ornaments and rings are found. Topkapı Hançeri (Topkapı Dagger) and Kaşıkçı Elması

(Kaşıkçı Diamond) which are from the most favorite pieces of the palace are exhibited in this hall.

Topkapı Dagger, which is adorned with very valuable diamonds and emeralds, was sent to Nadir Shah as a gift by Sultan Mahmud I. After the death of Shah, it turned back to treasury of Topkapı Palace.



86 carat Kaşıkçı Diamond adorned with 49 diamonds is 22<sup>nd</sup> biggest diamond of the world. Likewise, the golden cradle adorned with valuable stones and Sultan Mustafa III's armor exhibited in this hall are among the most beautiful pieces of the palace treasury.

The balcony with shadirwan which links the third room of Fatih Köşkü to the fourth room has a gorgeous view of Istanbul.



### **Has Oda (Private Room) and the Department of Mukaddes Emanetler (Sacred Relics)**

This section built by Fatih Sultan Mehmed was the private department of sultan in palace. Because of the şadirvan found in the entrance, the first part was called “Şadirvanlı Sofa (the hall with şadirvan).” The platform across the Hall with şadirvan was the section where sultan used to rest. The room on the left side of it is “Destimal Odası (Destimal Room)” which was the dorm of Has Odalı Enderun students (Enderun students of Has Oda).

The room on the right side of the Hall with şadivan is known as “Arzhane.” The sultan used to read his letters and meet people whom he accepted in this room. Its walls are covered with

very valuable Iznik and Kutahya tiles. 38<sup>th</sup> - 44<sup>th</sup> verses of chapter al-Ahzab (33) are written around the dome:

*“[Hence,] no blame whatever attaches to the Prophet for [having done] what Allah has ordained for him. [Indeed, such was] Allah’s way with those that have passed away aforetime and [remember that] Allah’s will is always destiny absolute; [and such will always be His way with] those who convey Allah’s messages [to the world], and stand in awe of Him, and hold none but Allah in awe: for none can take count [of man’s doings] as Allah does! [And know, O believers, that] Muhammad is not the father of any one of your men, but is Allah’s Apostle and the Seal of all Prophets. And Allah has indeed full knowledge of everything. And ever is*



*Allah all-Knowing. O you who have attained to faith! Remember Allah with unceasing remembrance. and extol His limitless glory from morn to evening. He it is who bestows His blessings upon you, with His angels [echoing Him], so that He might take you out of the depths of darkness into the light. And, indeed, a dispenser of grace is He unto the believers."*

The gate in Arzhane on which "As-salamu alaika ya Habiballah (peace be upon you o Beloved of Allah!)" is written opens to the most important room of the palace: Has Oda which is at the same time throne room. 45<sup>th</sup> - 47<sup>th</sup> verses of Chapter al-Ahzab (33) are written on its dome:

*"[And as for thee,] O Prophet - behold, We have sent thee as a witness [to the truth], and as a herald of glad tidings and a warner, and as one who summons [all men] to Allah by His leave, and as a light-giving beacon. And [so,] convey to the believers the glad tiding that a great bounty from Allah awaits them."*

Its walls are covered with the most beautiful Iznik tiles. Qasida al-Burdah written by Imam al-Busiri to praise the Prophet (pbuh) is written on tile boards.

Sultan would spend the most important part of his daytime in this room of the palace. A team of forty people selected from Enderun students was appointed as special servants of the sultan



him. Servants of Has Oda were at the same time the highest class students at Enderun and known as Agha (master) of Has Oda in the palace. The masters of Has Oda were known to be the closest people to sultan.

With the conquest of Egypt by Yavuz Sultan Selim, the office of the caliphate passed to Ottomans. The sacred relics found in Egypt, Mecca, and Medina were brought to Istanbul and taken under preservation in this room.

There is a covered throne on the left side of Has Oda. This throne was ordered to the palace head jeweler Derviş Zıllı Mehmed Effendi by Sultan Murad IV. Derviş Mehmed was the father of world-wide known traveler Evliya Çelebi.

Sultan's son who were to ascend to the throne and be the sultan used to perform two rak'ah (cycles) prayer, say invocations, and sit on the throne in Has Oda before cülus ceremony (the ceremony of ascending to throne). Şeyhülislam and Sadrazam (Grand Vizier) used to pledge loyalty (bay'ah) to him in this room. This custom continued until Sultan Mahmud II. During the time of Sultan Mahmud II, two sides of this throne were covered with silver grids and started to be used for preservation of Hirka-i Şerif (the Honorable Mantle of the Prophet) and Sacred Relics. For this reason, Has Oda is also known as Hirka-i Saadet Dairesi (the Department of the Mantle of Happiness).

Has Oda and the Department of Sacred Relics is the home of the most precious treasures of the world. These priceless pieces that we will cite some of them

below are treasures of paradise kept in Topkapı Palace:

Our Beloved Prophet's (pbuh) sword and bow.

Blessed beard of the Prophet (pbuh), his sandals and blessed footprint.

The letters written by the command of our Beloved Prophet (pbuh) to invite the rulers of the time to Islam, and his seal.

The blessed mantle of our Beloved Prophet (pbuh) which was preserved in the Department of Hirka-i Saadet.

The Noble Qur'an that Caliph Uthman was reading at the time that he was martyred.

Swords of the four caliphs and some other prominent Companions of the Prophet (pbuh).

Cover of the Ka'bah, its keys and golden gutters.





Forty students of Has Oda were responsible for all kinds of services of this room like maintenance and cleaning. These servants who at the same time knew the whole Qur'an by heart did not only take care of cleaning, but also would recite chapters from the Qur'an alternately for twenty-four hours in the Department of Sacred Relics. When it was his turn, Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan also recited the Qur'an in this room as one of these forty people throughout his life.

The Department of Hirka-i Saadet would be specially cleaned in the month of Ramadan and opened to public visits. It was visited by all high-ranking officials of the palace and notable scholars of the time. It would also be visited by the sultan himself during the last ten days of Ramadan and at the Night of Qadr.

The high floor covered with marble and found on the left side of the entrance

of Has Oda attracts attention. This area was the place where the final preparations for the funeral of the deceased sultans were made.

Before his ascension to throne, the last Ottoman Sultan Mehmed Vahdeddin VI saw the body of his elder brother Sultan Mehmed Reşad V lying in his coffin in this place and said the following noteworthy words:

- (I have learned that) how short the distance between throne and teneshir (the bench on which the body of the deceased is washed) is ... (Hilmi AYDIN, *Hirka-i Saadet Dairesi ve Mukaddes Emanetler*, p. 49)

There is a well with marble collet near this platform which served as the teneshir for sultans. The dust swept from the Department of Sacred Relics during its cleaning used to be thrown in this well in order to protect it not to be stepped on it.





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### In Topkapı Palace

While taking a walk in Revan Köşkü (Revan Mansion), I heard the sound of recitation of the Qur'an coming from the depths. Islamic architecture was lying in front of me. Because, the sound of recitation of the Qur'an at the reading desk is certainly necessary to add Islamic architecture a spirit. Without the sound of the Qur'an, this architecture appears weak. I expressed my opinion to my guide Lutfi Bey and asked from where this sound of Qur'an was coming. He said that it was from the Department of Hirka-i Saadet. I slowly approached to the window of

the room where the sound was coming. I looked and saw a hafiz of the Qur'an in a green, very green, spiritual room turned his back to the window and was reciting the Qur'an like a resting spirit engrossed in the other world; the other hafiz closed his eyes and was waiting on a corner by chanting the names of Allah with beads.

I asked my guide Lutfi Bey when the recitation of the whole Qur'an was completed (khatim) in Hirka-i Saadet? Lutfi Bey said smiling: "Every day! Every hour! For the last four hundred years, during days and nights without any break..."





Being amazed, I was listening with my eyes closed. Lutfi Bey gave some information:

“Yavuz Sultan Selim brought Hirka-i Serif, Sened-i Serif and other Sacred Relics which are the signs of the office of the caliphate to Istanbul along with the recitations of the Qur’an. In the night that he came to Istanbul, he placed them on a high place. He waited standing until morning regardless of his campaign fatigue while the head architect and workers were continuously building the place for the sacred relics. That night,

he established the task of recitation of the Qur’an during nights and days and designated forty hafizes of the Qur’an being himself the forth one. From that day on, the Qur’an was recited without any break in this department. Now, the number of hafizes is forty. They fulfill their duty alternately in twos. Today is the turn of the two hafizes you saw.”

Tonight, at this hour, while I am writing these lines the Qur’an is being recited, in the Department of Hirka-i Saadet! For four hundred years, it has been recited in this way without any break.

From that day on, this thought has been swinging like a pendulum in my memory. From that day on, I came to know what a strong ground the caliphate has in Turkish heart. I did not know the sound of the Qur’an continuing for four centuries such a near place in Istanbul. Many Turks, even many people of Istanbul do not know. None of the revolutions, incidents, or fights that took place in this palace could stop the sound of the Qur’an, not even a moment. After realizing this event, I got closer to understand why our enemies could not drive us out of Istanbul. (Yahya Kemal BEYATLI, *Aziz İstanbul*, p. 116-177.)



### Baghdad and Revan Mansions

One can pass from the third courtyard of the palace to the fourth one through a beautiful hallway. This hallway is very beautiful yard. The two mansions located in this yard were built by **Sultan Murad IV**.

Revan Mansion was built in 1636 in memory of Sultan Murad's victory in Revan (Erivan) expedition. The Sacred Relics in Has Oda and the Department of Hirka-i Saadet were temporarily kept in Revan Mansion during the annual cleaning of these places in Ramadan. Huzur classes (the classes held in the presence of the sultan) during winter months were held in Revan Mansion. The mansion was also used as the library of Has Oda for a while.

Likewise, Baghdad Mansion was built in 1639 in memory of the second conquest of Baghdad during the period of Sultan Murad IV. Baghdad Mansion is considered the best example of Turkish mansion (köşk) architecture. The silver brazier in the mansion was given as a gift by French king Louis XIV.

As understood from its name, **If-tariye Mansion**, which overlooks one of the best views of Bosphorus, was a place where sultan's iftar tables (tables to break fasting) of used to be set in some evenings of the month of Ramadan. It was built by **Sultan Ibrahim I** in 1640. Sultan used to celebrate feast that coincided with summer months with Enderun students in this mansion.

### Enderun Ağalar Mosque and Sofa Mosque

There are two mosques in the palace. One of them is Ağalar Mosque in Enderun. It was built by Sultan Mehmed



II. It serves as the palace library today. Topkapı Palace Library in which many books are kept today is one of the most precious manuscript libraries in the world.

The other mosque in the palace is Sofa Mosque which is located in the fourth courtyard. This mosque built by Sultan Mahmud II is among the best places in the palace. It is also a nice thing that it is open for visits and worship.



### Sofa Mansion and Hekimbaşı (Head Physician's) Room

It is also known as Kara Mustafa Pasha Mansion since it was built during the period of grand vizier **Kara Mustafa Pasha** in 1676-1683. It is known that **Sultan Ahmed III** liked this mansion very much. The sultan sometimes had his meals in this mansion. This mansion also became the place for meetings of poem recitation and halwa (dessert) during the Tulip Age.

The bronze brazier found in the mansion was given as a gift to Sultan Mahmud I by French king Louis XV.

Even if it was undergone some changes from time to time, the original



form of **Hekimbaşı Room** goes back to the time of Sultan Mehmed II. Because the building is also called Baş Lala Kulesi (Head Lala (Tutor) Tower), it is known that it was in the shape of a tower at first.

This place was used by the head doctor responsible for healthcare of sultan and his family. The drugs and medicine needed for treatment used to be produced in this room by the head doctor.



### Harem

Harem is the third section of Topkapı Palace that comes after Birun and Enderun (parts). We can say that harem is the most misinterpreted section of Topkapı Palace because of groundless and false information about it. During the early periods when Topkapı Palace was built, there was no Harem section in it. The sultan's family was living in the palace known "the Old Palace" in Beyazıt. In the period of Kanuni Sultan Suleyman (the Magnificent), harem section was started to be established.

When an Ottoman Sultan was in the palace, as he spent his daytime in Enderun, he spent the rest of day in

Harem after a tiring day. Harem was the part of the palace where the sultan's family lived. Sultan's mother, his sisters, daughters, sons, and female servants in service of his family resided in harem.

In the shortest sense, we can describe Harem as Enderun built for the women of the palace. Because every female servant in the palace was also a student of Harem which can be considered the female section of the palace school as Enderun was the male section. Women would take lessons of reading, writing, music, and other subjects in various branches of art in harem.

Harem was a school in which families of prospective statesmen,



who were educated in Enderun, were raised. Just as in Enderun, the students of Harem used to be selected among prominent young women known with their intelligence and beauty. 5 to 16 year-old students taken to harem used to be educated in much disciplined manner and trained in accordance with palace manners. Harem used to be managed by the sultan's mother or Valide (Mother) Sultan.

When the ruling sultan died, his wife and daughters used to be sent to the Old Palace in Beyazıt. A Valide Sultan who was sent to the Old Palace used to turn back to harem of Topkapı Palace with a great ceremony when his other son ascended to throne.

Harem section of the palace is composed of more than 300 rooms



linked to each other with hallways and placed around small inner courts. It has 46 toilets, 12 chest rooms, 9 bathrooms, 4 kitchens, 6 storerooms and a pool.

Harem was completely closed to outside. Strangers were not allowed to enter there. For this reason, it was given the name of “**harem**,” which means in Arabic “**prohibited area**.”



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Harem just a section of which is open to visits today consists of two parts; downstairs and upstairs. Gözdes and ikbals (favorite) women stayed upstairs. This place is entered through the gate called “kuşhane (aviary) gate” found in the second courtyard of the palace. Above the road called “golden road,” there are the rooms of “**the master of Dar al-Sa’adah**” and other harem masters who were under his command. Likewise, one may see upstairs the rooms of **Sultan Abdulhamit I, Sultan Osman III and Sultan Ahmed III. “Veliiaht Dairesi (Crown Prince Apartment)”** which is found in this part is famous for its tiles.

Downstairs, there is “**Cariyeler Avlusu (the Courtyard of Female Ser-**

**vants)**” descended through “**Kırk Merdiven (the Forty Stairs).**” On the two sides of this yard there are the rooms of the female servants. In the farthest hall, there are “**Cariyeler Hastanesi (the Hospital of Female Servants)**”, gasilhane (the room in which the bodies of the deceased are washed) and meyyid gate (the gate of the deceased) through which the bodies were taken out of the palace.

The part allocated to mother of the sultan in the harem consists of many rooms. Allocating the largest and the most beautiful part of harem to sultan’s mother is a sign of how much sultan loved and respected his mother.

The large bathroom and wide “**Hünkar Sofası (the Sultan Hall)**” with dome found in harem were presumably built during the ruling of **Sultan Murad III**. It was heavily damaged in a fire in 1665 and then repaired. The building today is the restored one built during the time of **Sultan Osman III**. Its walls are adorned with gorgeous fountains. Tiles of the walls are 18<sup>th</sup> century Netherland tiles.

Sultan Murad III’s Has Oda is another one of the most beautiful rooms of Harem. It was built by **Mimar (Architect) Sinan** in 1579. Walls of the room are covered with 16<sup>th</sup> century Iznik (Nicene) tiles. On one of the walls, a fountain is found which is one of the most beautiful examples of its kind. There is a very beautiful pool under this room. The rooms of **Sultan Ahmed I and Sultan Ahmed III** come after this hall.



The room of Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730), or the sultan of Tulip Age, was also called “**Yemiş Odası (the Fruit Room)**” since it was decorated with flower patterns.

**Şehzade Dairesi (the Prince Department)** and **Veliahd Dairesi (the Crown Prince Room)** found in Harem are the monuments of 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The part which is called **the Golden Road** occupies an important place in Harem’s plan. This part goes back to the time of Sultan Mehmed II. Harem was built with expansions around this hallway. This was called “the Golden Road” because the sultan used to scatter gold money to the people of harem while passing through it during the special occasions.

The following words of **İlber Ortaylı** one of the well-known Turkish

historians about Harem are very meaningful:

*“Life in Harem was not that much easy. It is very obvious that those people, who carelessly speak about Harem among the community, do not know and understand the difficult life in Harem and also the cultural environment created by talented and intelligent women in harem. They inconsiderately and ignorantly disrespect a community in history.*

*Harem was not a place of amusement. It was a house before anything else. It should be respected at least as the house of any family. Harem Department of Topkapı Palace should be a place studied beforehand and then visited in a silent and respectful manner.”* (İlber ORTAYLI, *Son İmparatorluk Osmanlı*, p. 79) □











ISTANBUL

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## DOLMABAĞÇE PALACE



*Even though my sultan Abdulmecid deplored saying, “my heart also testifies that it was built as flashy and cost excessively”, but as the poet says, that day, my beauty was “the beauty of a sultanate” opening out to the city through three gates and my existence was both honor and fame for Bosphorus. (Iskender PALA, Boğaziçi’ndeki Mücevher: Dolmabahçe Sarayı, p. 9)*

## DOLMABAHÇE PALACE

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, there was a beautiful cove in Beşiktaş in the area where Dolmabahçe Palace exists today. Even, the admiral of the navy used to anchor the ships to that cove. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, that cove turned almost into a swamp. For this reason, the swamp was drained, then filled, and made an imperial garden for sultans to get rest. The name “Dolmabahçe” (literally filled-in garden) was given to this garden, since it was made by filling the sea. In the beginning, it was called as *Beşiktaş Palace of the Sultan (Beşiktaş Sarayı Hümayunu)*, but then its name has been changed to Dolmabahçe Palace. It was built by the order of Sultan Abdülmecid between 1843-1856. Its architects were Garabet Balyan and Nigoğayos Balyan. It was established over an area of 250.000 m<sup>2</sup>. It contains 285 rooms, 46 halls, and 6 baths. Its facade was made of stone, interior wall made of brick, and inner floors were made of wood. Between 1910 and 1912 during the time

of Sultan Mehmet Reşat, electricity and central heating systems were added to the palace. In addition to the main building, the palace also consists of a building for the heir Prince, a building for furnishings and guards; Hareket Mansions,<sup>2</sup> a Glass Mansion and some other small sections. There are seven side gates to enter the palace; two of them are from the side of the land, five of them from the side of sea. One of the enormous gates is called as Treasure Gate, and another one is called Ceremonial (Sultanate) Gate.

The Palace was built in accordance with the model of European Palaces, completely away from traditional architecture. Its design is a combination of French Baroque, German Rococo, English Neoclassical and Italian Renaissance styles.

2. Hareket literally means movement or earthquake. These mansions have been called as “Hareket Mansions” maybe because they were built after an earthquake occurred in 1894.







The Palace was built on a 600-meter marble dock.

The Palace is composed of three parts; the *Mabeyn-i Humayun*: this section where the official state affairs were dealt with has two floors. It is one of the glorious sections of the palace. A ceremonial staircase, also called “**Crystal Staircase**” or “**Sultanate Staircase**,” which is on the first floor and connects



the entrance hall to the upper floor is very beautiful. Especially on the second floor, **Intizar and Süfera Halls**, where envoys waited and were hosted, and **the Red Room**, where the Sultan met with the envoys, are among the most beautiful halls of the palace.

After the entrance hall, the first



room on the right side is **the Clerk’s Office**, which is also called as **Tiled (Çinili) Hall**. This room was used by the chief clerk and other clerks, and sultanate’s correspondences were prepared there. The painting of *Surre-i Humayun* by Stefano Ussi is in that Hall.

This work is the biggest painting among the collection of the palace. The Sultan used Zülvecheyn Hall when he was passing to the section of this hall assigned for his private use. This Hall (Zülvecheyn) was used in religious ceremonies and on special days. In this Hall, Mawlid<sup>3</sup> used to be read, wedding cere-

3. \* A religious poem about the birthday of the



monies used to be performed, and in the month of Ramadan, Huzur lessons<sup>4</sup> used to be held. The workrooms and resting sections situated in this private section were used by the Sultan himself.

That hall is distinguished from other halls with the beauty of its parquet. Besides, there is a bookcase consisting



of the books of Abdulmecid. Another important and famous part of this section is Sultan's Bath. The marbles which was used in the Bath is called as Alabaster (water) marble; which was mined out of Nile's stream bed.

**Muayade Hall** (the Ceremonial Hall): It is situated between Mabeyn-i Hümâyûn (i.e. Selamlık, the quarters reserved for the men) and Harem-i Hümâyûn (i.e. the Harem, the residential apartments for the family of the Sultan). This is the most magnificent hall of



the palace. The hall has an area of 2000 square meter. It consists of 56 columns, and its 36 meter high dome was successfully hidden in facade. The plan of the hall is close to the shape of a square and it has a unique interior decoration. British-made 4.5 ton crystal chandelier was produced by special order. This hall is a special one, where holiday celebrations, very important state ceremonies and balls organized for the guests from for-



prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

4. \*\* Religious classes which were held right in the presence of the Sultan



eign states were held. It is the largest ball hall among others throughout the world. The galleries above the hall were made for the orchestra and diplomats, but there is no gallery situated in the area above the throne of the Sultan.

A 120 square meter Hereke Carpet covering the ground of this hall is quite precious. This carpet is the largest one in the palace.

**The Section of Harem:** This section of the palace is composed of two parts; Sultan's Room and Harem. Religious and holiday ceremonies used to be held in the "Blue Hall," which is situated in Sultan's Room. "Red Room" (also known as "Has Room") where the official meetings used to be done, is one of the magnificent rooms of this section.

**Pink Room,** furnished with huge mirrors, is another place among the outstanding parts of this section. This hall also has a beautiful terrace overlooking the sea. This hall is the place where the Sultan and his family lived.

In addition, Harem, situated in this section, consists of publicly and privately used rooms and places. ,



The magnificence and the power of Ottoman Empire were tried to be shown in the furnishings and decorations of Dolmabahçe Palace. Its furniture, silk carpets and curtains are preserved just like in their first day. The walls of the palace were furnished with the paintings of famous European artists of the time. About 1800 kg gold was used in decorations of the palace. The parquets covering the ground were made of precious woods, and it is the product of a fine artisanship. Hereke silk and wool carpets are quite precious. Crystal chandeliers decorating many rooms and halls, candlesticks, vases, fireplaces of the Palace were brought from European and Far Eastern countries.



The construction cost nearly 5 million gold coins. It is reported that just for the decorations and furnishings 1.5 million liras were spent.





Even, Sultan Abdulmecid deplored about such extravagance and when he saw the palace, he said, “Beşiktaş Palace is exaggerated, it could be simpler”. Thereupon, Fethi Ahmed Pasha said to the Sultan; “This is nothing for our Sultan.” (Ahmet AĞIN, Saraylarımız, p. 74)

It is not possible to understand belittling of politicians to spend that much money for a palace in a country whose economy was in debt. Military and education were almost led to a bankruptcy.

Abdulmecid who ordered to build this palace died 6 months after the construction. After him, the palace was used by Abdulaziz and Murat V for a short time. Sultan Abdulhamit did not prefer to stay in this palace. During the thirty-three years of sultanate after Sultan

Abdulhamit II, the palace was used for only religious festivals, twice in a year.

Moreover, between 1927 and 1949, it was used as the Presidential Residence. The founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, stayed in this palace when he was in Istanbul, and he passed away in this palace on November 10, 1938.

The palace theatre that is located at the feet of Gümüşsuyu and Maçka, İstabl-i Amire, Atiyye-yi Seniyye Storehouses, Pharmacy, Baker house, Flour Factory and some other parts of the palace did not survive until this day.

The palace can be visited from 9.00 to 15.00 everyday, except Mondays and Thursdays. □





## BEYLERBEYI PALACE



“Wherever there is a divinely beautiful, high, elegant mound, or a hill or a piece of land, there is absolutely a mosque, a palace or a Turkish cottage there. There isn’t any place around Bosphorus, or a ridge or a bay in Asian and European shores on which a pasha or a vizier did not built a villa or a garden.” (Alphonse de Lamartine, *İstanbul Yazıları*, p.128-129)

## BEYLERBEYI PALACE

Beylerbeyi Palace is located on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, in Beylerbeyi district. It was built by Sultan Abdulaziz. Its architects were Sarkis and Agop Balyan. It was built between 1863 and 1865. It is estimated that it cost nearly 500.000 Ottoman liras.

The palace is a two-story stone building constructed above a high basement. 65-meter-wide palace was constructed on an area of 2500 square meter, and it was placed parallel to the Bosphorus. The palace contains 6 halls, 24 rooms, a Turkish bath and a bathroom.

The palace consists of 3 parts as; Mabeyn-i Humayun, Sultan's Bedroom,



the Room of Sultan's Mother. The Hall with Pool and the section called as Blue Hall because of the color of its pillars are the most beautiful parts of the palace. Sultan Abdulaziz's interest in sailing can be seen clearly in the decorations and motifs which were used in some of the rooms and halls.



Beylerbeyi Palace was used as a summer residence. And from time to time, it was used to host foreign presidents. Empress Eugenie of France, Emperor Joseph of Austria-Hungary, Crown Prince Guillaume Nicola Charles of Prussia, Shah Nasireddin of Iran were some of the guests stayed in Beylerbeyi Palace.

Sultan Abdulhamit II spent a kind of prison life in this palace after his dethronement. He spent last 6 years of his life in this palace and died there on 10 February 1918.

The palace is open from 9.00 to 15.00 everyday, except Mondays and Thursdays.

Sea mansions of the palace, Marble mansion in the backyard and Sarı (Yellow) Mansion are other sections of the palace. Marble Mansion is a building survived from the time of Sultan Mahmud II.

The stables are also situated in the backyard of the palace. And sea mansions were built by Sultan Abdulaziz. And other sections of the palace are the remnants of a palace previously existed there.





## ÇIRAĞAN PALACE

The construction of the palace was started by Abdulmecid in 1857, in place of a wood palace that had existed there before. After the death of the sultan, the construction could not be completed because of economic problems. However, the construction was completed by Sarkis Balyan with the order of Sultan Abdulaziz. The palace, which was completed in 4 years, cost 4 million gold coins. This palace was built with money borrowed from European countries.

During the construction of the palace, a Mawlawi Lodge (House) was destroyed. And this was considered as a bad luck among the public. Because of such rumors, Sultan Abdulaziz did not

want to live in the palace and moved to Dolmabahçe Palace.

Çırağan Palace was used as the Building of General Assembly on 14 November 1909.

Çırağan Palace, which is not inferior to Dolmabahçe in the terms of magnificence, unfortunately burned in a fire on 20 January 1910. The palace ruined and burned down in 5 hours. Along with the palace, its valuable antiques, Sultan Abdulhamit II's special collection, and Sultan Murat V's library were too burned and destroyed in the palace.

Many years later in 1992, the palace was changed into a five-star hotel under the name of "Çırağan Palace Hotel" after a restoration. □





## YILDIZ PALACE



*“Famous German politician Prince Bismarck who established the North German Confederation said about Sultan Abdulhamit II: “If there were 100 grams of intellect in the world, 90 grams of it would belong to Abdulhamit II, 5 grams would belong to me, and 5 grams would belong to the rest of the politicians in the world.”*

## YILDIZ PALACE



Situated in the middle of an area of almost 500.000 m<sup>2</sup> of woods, Yıldız Palace consists of pavilions and villas attached to it. The palace was first built for Mihrişah Sultan, mother of the Sultan Selim III.

The palace was extended with the buildings constructed by Bezm-i Alem Sultan, mother of Sultan Mahmut II and Sultan Abdulmecid. And during the time of Sultan Abdulaziz, Malta, Çadır and Çit Cottages were built in the wide area of woodland of the palace.

Yıldız woodland was used as hunting place and imperial garden by Ottoman Sultans since the time of Sultan Süleiman, the Magnificent.

The time of Sultan Abdulhamid II was the heyday of the palace. Between 1876 and 1909, it was used as the central Palace of the State for 33 years. Even though it is not as spectacular as Dolmabahçe, it is more sheltered than it is. Sultan Abdulhamit II used Yıldız Palace as a safe house, because Dolmabahçe was open to all kinds of attacks coming from the sea.





The buildings forming the parts of the palace are located in northern side of Yıldız Woodland surrounded by high walls. The area in which the buildings of Great Mabeyn, Harem, Çit Cottage, Şale Cottage, Yıldız Theatre, Gun House, and Set Cottage are located is called “**the Imperial Garden (Has Bahçe).**” Today, the place which serves the people of Istanbul today under the name of Yıldız Park, was called “**outside garden**” at the time. Çadır and Malta Mansions and Yıldız Porcelain Factory are situated in this part of the palace.

Şale Mansion, one of the most impressive sections of the palace, takes its name from the French word “chalet” which means “cottage.” It is one of the best works of Ottoman architecture of 19<sup>th</sup> century. It consists of three sections

connected to each other, which were built in different times.

Because of his interest in carpentry, Sultan Abdulhamit also added a carpenter workshop to the pace. He himself worked in this workshop, too. And he rested by working in this workshop when he felt tired because of the governmental







jobs. The workshop was changed into a museum in 1994. Carved and decorated wooden artifacts, thrones, porcelains which were made in Porcelain Factory and other objects related to the palace are exhibited there. And in the City Museum, which is opened right next to this museum, glass, porcelain, silver objects and paintings of Istanbul are exhibited.

The first section of the Şale Cottage was built in 1880. But then, when extra halls and rooms were needed, a new building was constructed by architect Sarkis Balyan in 1889. After the construction of the Merasim Cottage by Italian architect D'Aranco, the building of this Cottage was completed in 1898. The 406 square meter Hereke carpet covering the floor of this hall is one of the most precious pieces of the palace.

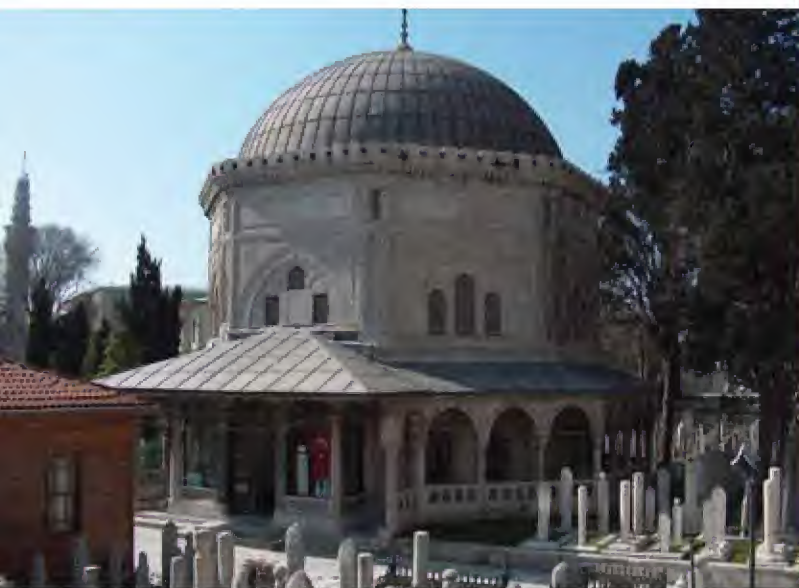
Because the nacre-inlaid gates of the dining hall were brought from

Çırağan Palace, this hall is called the Hall with Nacres (Sedefli Salon). The furniture in this hall was made by Sultan Abdulhamit II in the workshop of the palace. Ceramic stoves of the palace are really beautiful.

The palace is open between 9.30 and 16.00 everyday, except Mondays and Thursdays □







# LODGES AND SHRINES

- ❖ THE HILL OF JOSHUA
- ❖ THE TOMBS OF THE COMPANIONS
- ❖ EBU'L VEFA
- ❖ TOMB OF MERKEZ EFENDI
- ❖ YAHYA EFENDI CONVENT
- ❖ THE TOMB OF AZIZ MAHMUD HUDAYI
- ❖ THE TOMBS OF THE SULTANS



# THE HILL OF JOSHUA AND HIS TOMB



*And remember when Moses said to this servant "I will not give up (travelling) until I reach the junction of the two seas or (until) I spend years and years in travelling." But then when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their fish, and it took its way through the sea as in a tunnel. (Surah al-Kahf, 18:60-61)*

## THE HILL OF JOSHUA AND HIS TOMB

Yuşa Hill or the Hill of Joshua is located in Anadolu Kavağı, in Beykoz province. At the top of the hill, there is a tomb which is believed to belong to Yuşa (Joshua), and a mosque built next to it.

According to the narrations, Yuşa (pbuh), who was one of the commanders of Moses (pbuh), was the son of Moses' sister. He was mentioned as "Yeşu" in Christian and Jewish sources. After Moses' death, – even though there is no clear information – it is believed that Joshua continued the mission of prophethood. It is even supposed that he was the person who saved the Jews from nomadism and helped them to settle down in Canaan.

The journey of Moses and the Khidr (as) was told in chapter al-Kahf verse 60-65. According to Muslim scholars, Joshua was the servant of the Moses mentioned in that story.

The belief that the tomb belongs to Yuşa is based on a miraculous act of Yahya Efendi whose tomb is located in Beşiktaş. However, in reality, it is not possible to say for sure that this tomb belongs to Yuşa, because there are also narrations expressing that Yuşa's tomb is in the city of Nablus or Maarra which is near to Aleppo (Halep). And again, it is not known whether Yuşa (pbuh) came to Istanbul or not. When we think about that this hill was also regarded as a sa-





cred place during the time of Byzantine Empire, then we can say that it may belong to a saint or a disciple of Jesus (pbuh) (hawari).

In 1755, a mosque was built and the tomb was surrounded with walls by Mehmed Sait Pasha. It was repaired by Sultan Abdulaziz in 1863 after it was destroyed by a fire.

### **The Journey of Moses and Khidr**

And (remember) when Musa (Moses) said to his boy-servant: “I will not give up (travelling) until I reach the junction of the two seas or (until) I spend years and years in travelling.”

However, when they reached the junction of the two seas, they forgot their

fish, and it took its way through the sea as in a tunnel.

So when they had passed further on (beyond that fixed place), Musa (Moses) said to his boy-servant, “Bring us our morning meal; truly, we have suffered much fatigue in this, our journey.”

He said, “Do you remember when we betook ourselves to the rock? I indeed forgot the fish; none but Satan made me forget to remember it. It took its course into the sea in a strange (way)!”

[Musa (Moses)] said: “That is what we have been seeking.” So, they went back retracing their footsteps.

Then they found one of Our slaves, on whom We had bestowed mercy from Us, and whom We had taught knowledge from Us. (al-Kahf, 18: 60-65) □



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# THE TOMBS OF THE COMPANIONS

ISTANBUL



The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:

*“There is no one among my Companions who dies in a land except that he shall be resurrected as a guide and light for them (people of that land) on the Day of Resurrection.”*  
(Tirmidhi, Manaqib, 58)

## THE TOMBS OF THE COMPANIONS

Companions are people, who saw the Prophet Muhammad in their lives, believed his prophecy, and spent time with him. The Companions who believed in Islam during the times when Islam was weak endured all kinds of hardships and sufferings. They were such people that loved, protected, and served to our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Because of this, they are loved and respected by all Muslims.

The Companions, whose graves are in Istanbul, came to this city to conquer Byzantine –whose conquest by Muslims was heralded by our Prophet Muhammad – during the times of Umayyads and Abbasids. And they were martyred or died because of different reasons here.

After the conquest of the city, tombs and mosques were built on and around these graves during the time of Ottomans.

Among these sacred places which are visited by huge groups of Muslims and which are known for sure to be the tombs of the Companions are the graves of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari's and



Abu Shaibah al-Hudri - which is near to Ayvansaray.

In addition to these two, there are 28 more tombs attributed to the companions in Istanbul. 9 of them are at the foot of Ayvansaray Walls, 4 of them in Eyüp province, 3 of them are in Karaköy Yeraltı Mosque, one of them is in Karacaahmet Cemetery, and 12 of them are in Suriçi region. Although these places are believed to be the graves of the companions, the reality is not known. Abu Ayyub al-Ansari's and Abu Shaibah al-Hudri were really companions, and they also took part in the siege of Istanbul, died, and were buried within the borders of the city.

Likewise, Abu Darda, Abu Dhar al-Ghifari, Amr b. al-As, Abu Said al-Khudri and Jabir b. Abdullah were really companions but these people never came to Istanbul and did not die here. And the places claimed to be tombs of these companions are belong to either people we do not know whether or not they were Companions, or to people who are wrongfully claimed to be companions. □



## EBU'L VEFA

ISTANBUL



*Our Sultan Fatih has a sensitive and enthusiastic heart. If he enters here and experiences the pleasures of our circles, he will never want to leave and go back to his task of ruling the state. Nevertheless, this land and ummah (Muslim community) have been entrusted to him. Unless a person as qualified as he is comes and takes over his responsibilities, this land and the ummah will get harmed. Then, both of us would become sinners.*



## EBU'L VEFA

Ebu'l Vefa, who has given his name to the town where his tomb and lodge are situated, was one of the famous friends of Allah who lived in Istanbul. Sheikh Ebu'l Vefa, whose date of birth is unknown, was born in Konya, and he died in Istanbul in 1490.

The talks of Sheikh Ebu'l Vefa were wise and witty. His conversations were enjoyable and people were looking forward to joining to his circles. He liked to have a conversation with his dervishes and used to prefer spending his time with people who were not fond of this world. Famous politicians of his time came to

his lodge and waited for him to accept them to his circle.

Sultan Fatih Mehmed and Sultan Beyazid II loved and showed him a lot of respect.

Sultan Beyazid II asked him to lead the wedding ceremony of his daughter. And he sent 40.000 coins to his lodge as a gift. However, Sheikh Ebu'l Vefa did not accept this gift and responded to Sultan saying,

- You can give this money to Muhyiddin Konevi Efendi, he is poor. And he is also an honorable person. You should make him to lead this wedding.







### **The Door that does not open for Sultan Mehmet II**

Sultan Fatih enjoyed visiting the friends of Allah (*awliya*). One day, he wanted to visit Sheikh Ebu'l Vefa a lot. He went to his lodge with people close to him. Lo and behold! The door which was open to everyone was closed for the sultan! Sultan got very sad. And the Sheikh's situation inside was not much different from the Sultan's. Because of their manners, his dervishes couldn't find the courage to ask questions about what was happening. Nevertheless, they were wondering what the reason of this matter was and how it was going to develop. The door, which was open even to the drunk, was closed to the sultan who gained the compliment of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Great Sultan

who had destroyed Byzantine city walls was unable to open the door of a lodge and he sadly came back.

After a while, the sultan went to the lodge to visit the Sheikh again. However, the result was the same. The door was closed again. The Sultan said to his aide:

- Get in to the sheikh's presence with a great respect. And learn what is wrong? What is this mystery?

The aide got into Sheikh's presence. The Sheikh Ebu'l Vefa said to the aide that;

- *Our Sultan Fatih has a sensitive and enthusiastic heart. If he enters here and experiences the pleasures of our circles, he will never want to leave and go back to his task of ruling the state. But*



*this land and ummah (Muslim community) have been entrusted to him. Unless a person as qualified as he is comes and takes over his responsibilities, this land and the ummah will get harmed. Then, both of us would become sinners. And then his soul will be filled with air of this spiritual environment and he will give everything he owns to this lodge as a charity. All of the means which could be given to the widowed, orphan, poor, helpless, and destitute will be given to this lodge. At the same time, the love for this world will penetrate into the hearts of dervishes and our order will be destroyed. We are praying for and turning our attention to our sultan from here. His heart is in our hearts.*

After the aide left sheikh's presence and told what had happened inside to the Sultan who was curiously waiting at the door of the lodge, the Sultan asked;

- While expressing these feelings how was his Excellency?

The aide said,

- My Sultan! While he was saying these words, the tears were shedding down to his face. He must have a sorrow in his heart.

The Sultan bowed his head down. He never had a chance to meet with Sheikh Ebu'l Vefa. When the news of Sultan's death arrived to him, the Sheikh went to the palace and led his funeral prayer. (Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ, *Tarihten Günümüze İbret İşıkları*, p. 177-179)

### **Why does a kid make a mistake?**

Sheikh Ebu'l Vefa's son, whose father was one of the famous scholars at the time of Sultan Fatih, had a bad habit. With a nailed wood, he was puncturing holes into bags of watermen who were

carrying water to the houses. Watermen said “he is the son of a religious man” and did not tell anything to his father at the beginning, but then when the kid did not give up this bad habit, they complained to Ebu’l Vefa. Ebu’l Vefa was shocked when he heard what had happened. How could a kid who was grown carefully and away from forbidden food give people such harm?

Ebu’l Vefa said to the watermen, “the issue is understood. I will do whatever is necessary. And your loss will be recompensed.” First he started to look for the problem in himself. He thought that “have I ever made him to eat forbidden food?” When he couldn’t find anything, he asked to his wife, “Have you ever eaten haram food while you were pregnant for this child, or while nursing him? Think carefully! Otherwise,

the end of this child is bad!” His wife thought for a while, and finally remembered an incident.

While she was pregnant for him, she had made a visit to a neighbor’s house and seen some oranges on a plate. She wanted to eat, but she was embarrassed to ask for it. When the hostess left the room, she made a hole on an orange with her needle and sipped its juice. When the wife told about this event, the Sheikh said to her, “O my wife! Go to that neighbor immediately, tell her clearly what you did, and ask for forgiveness. And then he called for the watermen, paid their loss and then asked for their forgiveness. Then he talked to his child and explained him what he had done was wrong. And finally, the kid gave up puncturing holes into the water bags. □



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## THE TOMB OF MERKEZ EFENDI





## THE TOMB OF MERKEZ EFENDI

The tomb which is situated in the district of Merkez Efendi, in Zeytinburnu Mevlanakapı, belongs to Merkez Efendi, one of the sheikhs of Halveti Sufi Order.

Merkez Efendi was born in the village of Sarhanlı in the city of Denizli in 1460. His real name is Musa Muslihiddin, but he is known as Merkez Efendi.

He moved to Bursa when he was 15 years old and attended to the Madrasa of Veliyuddin. After 15 years of education in this madrasa, he moved back to Istanbul. Medicine was among the sciences he had learned. Because of his extensive knowledge in medicine, his Sheikh Sümbül Efendi sent him to Bimarhane (Old

Turkish Hospital) in the city of Manisa as an attendant. Merkez Efendi who served a lot to the patients of the city to get their health back, is also the inventor of Manisa's Mesir Macunu, or a kind of paste made from 41 different spices.

After the death of Sümbül Efendi, Merkez Efendi came back to Istanbul and became the master of Halveti Lodge after the death of his sheikh.

Merkez Efendi was a modest, kind, and nice person. Ebussuud, the Sheikh al-Islam at that time, emphasized one of his characteristics as follows;

"I have not seen anybody so much away from hypocrisy as this respected man is."



He protected the weak and poor, cared for children and made compliments to them all the time. He would carry nuts in his pocket in order to give them away wherever he saw children.

Merkez Efendi passed away in 1551 at the age of 91. Sheikh al-Islam himself led his funeral prayer. May Allah be pleased with him.

### The Center of the Matter

One of the friends of Allah (awliya), Sünbül Efendi once asked a question to his disciples;

- What would you do if Allah gave you the duty of administering this universe?

The disciples who were never heard such a question were shocked. But they thought for a while in order to give answer to their sheikh, and they presented various responses;

- Sir, I would not let any infidel (kafir) to live on this earth!

- I would annihilate all kind of evil!

- I would destroy those who drink alcohol!

But one of them was silent without giving any answer. That person attracted Sünbül Efendi's attention. He looked at him and asked;

- My son, what about you? What would you do?

The disciple, whose face turned red because of his manners, said;

"Is there any deficiency created by Allah in this universe which requires me to change?! While the divine order of this universe is going on so perfectly, how can I say "I would do such and such" with my limited mind? How would I dare?"

Sünbül Efendi felt glad after hearing this answer, and laid eyes on him with his smile and said;

- Now, the matter has found its place!

After this incident, that disciple started to be known as Merkez Efendi, and his real name Musa Muslihiddin was forgotten. (Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ, *Asr-i Saadetten Günümüze Faziletler Medeniyeti-1*, p. 358-359) □



## YAHYA EFENDI LODGE

ISTANBUL



*Everybody who had come to this world went back burning  
Now it is my turn. Let me burn rotating*



## YAHYA EFENDI LODGE

Yahya Efendi lodge is situated in a dead-end street called Yahya Efendi in Yıldız district in Beşiktaş. It was built in 1538 by Yahya Efendi. He was a disciple of Uwaysi Sufi Order. The lodge which carries the characteristics of a kulliyah (Islamic-Ottoman social complex) has a mosque, tevhidhane (the place where sema (mevlevi) ritual was performed), madrasa, Turkish bath, and tombs in it.

Yahya Efendi, who was born in 1495 in Trabzon, was the son of Omer Efendi, the judge of the city of Trabzon. Süleyman, the son of Yavuz Sultan Selim, was born in the same year when his father was the governor of Trabzon. Because the mother of Süleyman, Hafsa Sultan's milk was not enough, Yahya

Efendi's mother, Afife Sultan nursed the little Süleyman. So, Yahya Efendi was the nursing brother of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent.

After he got a well education in Trabzon, he wanted to continue his education and came to Istanbul. Then he became a student of Zenbilli Ali Efendi, the famous Sheikh al-Islam at that time. But 2 years later, his master passed away.

Yahya Efendi worked as a mudarris (professor) in some of the madrasas in Istanbul. But then, he quit professorship and started to spend time by studying and performing acts of worship in the masjid that he had built near his house in Beşiktaş.



Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent showed great respect to this friend of Allah, who was also his nursing brother. There was a special relationship between them. Yahya Efendi sometimes was giving him advice while he sometimes was warning him. Later, Sulaiman's son Sultan Selim II also continued to show the sheikh same respect and love as his father did.

Yahya Efendi, who dedicated his life to knowledge and worship, passed away in the evening of sacrificial festival in 1570. His funeral prayer was performed by Sheikh al-Islam Ebussuud Efendi in Suleymaniye Mosque. By the command of Sultan Selim II, Yahya Efendi's tomb was built by Sinan the Architect.



Yahya Efendi, who was loved by all kinds of people, was especially visited by the sailors, and they brought him presents. Especially Muslim and Christian sailors who were setting off for or coming back from Black Sea were visiting him and asking his prayers.

Sailors who believed that Yahya Efendi was spiritual guard of Beşiktaş, and Aziz Mahmud Hüdayi was the guard of Üsküdar, and Yuşa was guard of Beykoz would stop their ships at those three places and pray for these three men.

### Shepherd Balaban

One day, a shepherd named Balaban lost his sheep. Although he looked for them for a long time, he could not find them. And exhausted he came to Yahya Efendi Lodge. Sheikh Yahya Efendi, who saw how much the man was exhausted, ordered his disciples to serve him. And the disciples brought him bread, butter, and honey. Sheikh complimented to the shepherd saying:

- Here it is fresh butter, fresh honey, fresh bread,
- If you wish, dip your bread into butter, or if you wish, dip it into honey.

The shepherd, who was touched by the compliments of the Sheikh, donated all his sheep to the lodge as gift. (Associate Prof. Mekmet AKKUŞ, *Sahabeden Günümüze Allah Dostları*, V. 8, p. 130-31)

### The Ring which dropped into the Sea

The following incident which happened between Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent and Yahya Efendi clearly shows how close they were.

One day, when Kanuni was on a trip around Bosphorus, he stopped the rowboat at a place close to Yahya Efendi Lodge. Then he invited the Sheikh, but the sheikh did not come to the rowboat alone and came with a guy who had a bright face.

The Sultan and the sheikh started to have a nice conversation while they were continuing the trip. But the man was not joining the conversation and was constantly looking at Sultan's precious ring. Kanuni realized that, and gave the ring to the man. But the man immediately threw the ring into the sea. Although Sultan was resented, he did not tell anything

because of his respect to Sheikh Yahya Efendi.

When their trip has ended and they berthed to the coast, this person bended to the ground, took a handful water from the sea and showed his hands to Kanuni, who was amazedly looking at him. When Kanuni saw the ring in the hands of him, which was thrown into the sea not so long ago; he unwillingly took the ring. Sultan was about to say something but this bright faced person quickly left them alone and then disappeared. Sultan got confused. Seeing the wonder in Sultan's face, Yahya Efendi, smiled and explained;

- My Sultan! That man was Khidr, whom you had desired to see for a long time! (Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ, *Abide Şahsiyetleri ve Müesseseleriyle Osmanlı*, p. 177-178) □





# THE TOMB OF AZIZ MAHMUD HUDAYI

ISTANBUL



## THE TOMB OF AZIZ MAHMUD HUDAYI

Aziz Mahmud Hudayi lodge, which is located in the district with the same name in Üsküdar, was built in 1594-1595 by Aziz Mahmud Hudayi, the founder of Jalwati Sufi Order. The lodge, which was founded in the form of a *kulliyah* (*Islamic-Ottoman social complex*), consists of a kitchen, a cemetery, tombs, mosque, *tevhidhane* (the place where mawlawi ritual was performed), a library, a section for women, and houses.

Aziz Mahmud Hudayi was one of the notable friends of Allah in Istanbul. His name Hudayi and title “aziz (highly esteemed)” were given to him by his Sheikh.

Before he adhered to his Sheikh Uftada, he had been serving as a judge and a professor in Bursa. An interesting case brought to his court by a woman who wanted to divorce her husband changed his life completely. He resigned from being a judge and professor, adhered to Sheikh Uftada, and became his disciple. His master gave him the title “Hudayi.”

After Hudayi came to Istanbul and established his lodge, his lodge in Üsküdar turned into a school of wisdom and knowledge in a very short time. Sultans of the time became his students. **Sultan Murat III, Ahmed Han I, Osman II and Murad IV** were some of his stu-





dents who adhered to him Because of his following prayer that he made before his death, his tomb turned into one of the places frequently visited by many people of Istanbul:

*“O Lord! Those who enter our way till the very last day and those whose paths cross with our tomb and recite a Fatiha even if it be once in their lives are among us. May they not drown in the sea, and not experience poverty in their old age. May they not die until they salvage their iman (faith). May they know the time of their death and let us know the time of their death. May they not die by drowning in the sea.”*

Aziz Mahmud Hudayi passed away in 1628.

### **A Withered Flower**

One day, Sheikh Uftada went on a trip to Uludağ with his disciples. Dis-

ciples presented to their Sheikh bunches of colorful flowers. However, Aziz Mahmud brought to him only a withered flower the stalk of which was broken. Sheikh Uftada said:

- O my son, all of your friends brought bunches of colorful flowers. Do you deem that I am worth of only this flower?

Aziz Mahmud said:

- Nothing is enough to present to my Sheikh. However, whenever I attempted to pick a flower, I heard that it was praising Allah and I could not pick it. However, when I saw this flower, which cannot praise Allah because it was broken, I took it and brought it to you. (Prof. Dr. Et-hem CEBECİOĞLU, *Sahabeden Günümüze Allah Dostları*, Commission, vol. 8, p. 216)





**May Allah let the sultans walk next to your mount**

One day, when Sultan Ahmed I was going to Üsküdar, he came across with Aziz Mahmud Hudayi. He immediately got off his mount and asked the Sheikh to get on it. And the sultan started to walk next to the sheikh on foot. However, the Sheikh was not happy about riding the horse while the sultan was walking next to him. After a while, he said “I accepted to get on the horse just to make my Sheikh’s prayer about me to come true and to fulfill the command of my Sultan!” and then he got down from

the mount. By this way, Sheikh Uftada’s prayer reading as “O my son! May Allah let the sultans walk next to your mount” came true. (Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ, *Tarihten Günümüze İbret Işıkları*, p. 282-283). Karamah (A Saintly Miracle)

Sultan Ahmed would show Hudayi utmost respect and treat him in the best manner. One day he was having a conversation with Aziz Mahmud Hudayi in the palace. For a moment, Aziz Mahmud Hudayi wanted to perform ablution and thus a pitcher and a basin were brought to him. The sultan took the pitcher and the basin out of his respect to Sheikh and



started to pour water while the Sheikh was performing ablution. Meanwhile, Sultan Ahmed Han's mother prepared a towel for the sheikh and thought in her heart for a moment "I wish I could witness a *miracle* (*karamah*) of Sheikh Aziz Mahmud Hudayi!" Then, Aziz Mahmud Hudayi felt her wish by the grace of Allah and said:

- Unbelievable! Some people want us to manifest *keramat*! Can there be a greater miracle than having the caliph of the earth (Sultan) serve us, and having his respectable mother prepare a towel

for us? (Osman Nuri TOPBAŞ, *Asr-ı Saadetten Günümüze Faziletler Medeniyeti – I*, p. 321-322)

### The Gate of Servitude

One day, Sultan Murad IV with his tutor (*lala*) went to the lodge to visit the Sheikh Hudayi. When they arrived the gate of the lodge and were asked as "Who is this?" by a disciple, and the sultan's tutor answered promptly as follows:

"The Sultan of the seven lands, the sultan who is the son of the Sultan, Sultan Murad Han IV honored this place! Let the Sheikh be informed immediately!"

The disciple didn't open the gate by saying "This is not the gate for the sultanate!" Sultan Murad Han IV smiled at the state of his tutor and said;

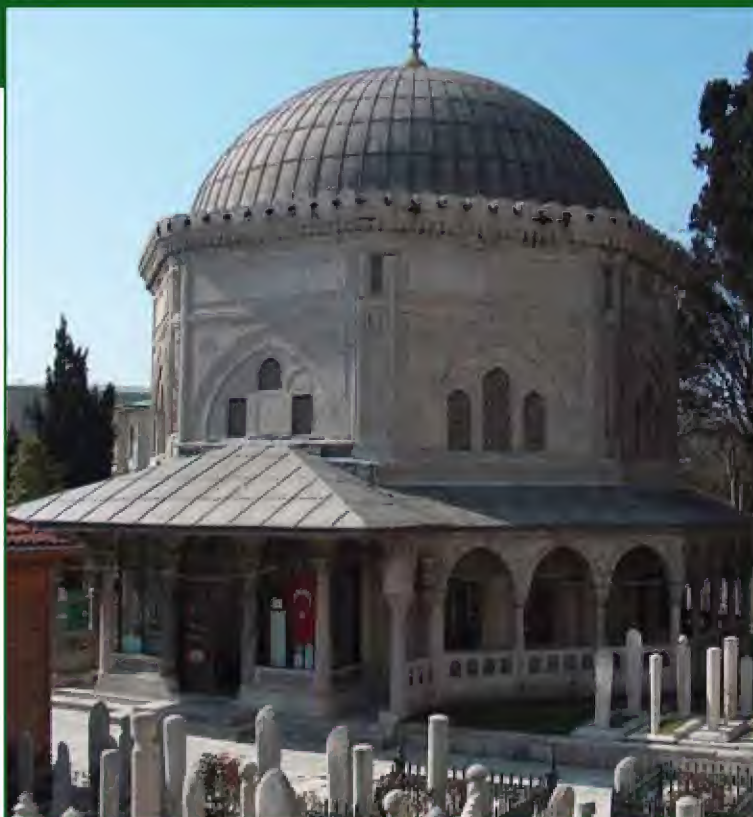
- O Tutor! This gate is the gate of servitude and heart. And then, he knocked the door again and answered the same question with a great politeness as follows:

- Please tell the Sheikh that the servant Murad is here!

After this response, the gate was opened and they could enter the lodge.

(Osman Nuri Topbaş, *Abide Şahsiyetleri ve Müesseseleriyle Osmanlı*, p. 276-277) □

## THE TOMBS OF THE SULTANS



*Before his ascension to throne, the last Ottoman Sultan Mehmed Vahdeddin VI saw the body of his elder brother Sultan Mehmed Reşad V lying in his coffin in this place and said the following noteworthy words:*

*- (I have learned) how short the distance between throne and teneshir (the bench on which the body of the deceased is washed) is ... (Hilmi AYDIN, Hirka-i Saadet Dairesi ve Mukaddes Emanetler; p. 49)*

## THE TOMBS OF THE SULTANS

***Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror:*** He is buried in his tomb with one sarcophagus in the yard of Fatih Mosque. front yard of Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) Mosque with forty-two sarcophagi.

***Sultan Bayezid Veli:*** He is buried in his tomb with one sarcophagus in the yard of Bayezid Mosque in Beyazıt. the third great tomb from the corner in the front yard of Hagia Sophia Mosque with fifty-four sarcophagi.

***Sultan Selim the Steadfast:*** Sultan Selim is buried in his tomb with one sarcophagus in the yard of Yavuz Selim Mosque. ***Sultan Mehmed III:*** He is buried in the first great tomb from the corner in the front yard of Hagia Sophia Mosque with twenty-six sarcophagi and sebil (public fountain).

***Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent:*** He is buried in his huge tomb with seven sarcophagi in the yard of Süleymaniye Mosque located in Süleymaniye district. ***Sultan Ahmed I:*** He is buried in his tomb with thirty-six sarcophagi next to the Blue Mosque in Sultanahmet district.

***Sultan Selim II:*** He is buried in the second great tomb from the corner in the ***Sultan Osman II:*** He is buried in his father's huge tomb with thirty-six







sarcophagi next to the Blue Mosque in Sultanahmet district.

**Sultan Murad IV:** He is buried in his father's huge tomb with thirty-six sarcophagi next to the Blue Mosque in Sultanahmet district.

**Sultan Ibrahim:** He is buried in his uncle Mustafa I's tomb with seventeen sarcophagi located next to the front wall of Hagia Sophia Mosque.

**Sultan Mehmed IV:** He is buried in his mother's huge tomb with forty-five sarcophagi behind the New Mosque in Eminönü.

**Sultan Süleiman II:** He is buried in the tomb of Sultan Süleyman I with seven sarcophagi in the yard of Süleymaniye Mosque in Süleymaniye district.

**Sultan Ahmed II:** He is buried in the tomb of Sultan Süleyman I with sev-

en sarcophagi in the yard of Süleymaniye Mosque in Süleymaniye district.

**Sultan Mustafa II:** He is buried in his grandmother's and father's tomb called Turhan Sultan Tomb, with forty-five sarcophagi behind the New Mosque in Eminönü district.

**Sultan Ahmed III:** He is buried in his grandmother's and father's tomb called Turhan Sultan Tomb, with forty-five sarcophagi behind the New Mosque in Eminönü district.

**Sultan Mahmud I:** He is buried in Turhan Sultan Tomb with forty-five sarcophagi behind the New Mosque in Eminönü district.

**Sultan Osman III:** He is buried in the Turhan Sultan Tomb with forty-five sarcophagi behind the New Mosque in Eminönü district.

**Sultan Mustafa III:** He is buried in Laleli Tomb with eight sarcophagi located in front of Laleli Mosque in Laleli district.

**Sultan Abdülhamid I:** He is buried in Hamidiye Tomb with twenty sarcophagi located opposite to Vakıf Hanı in Bahçekapı district.

**Sultan Selim III:** He is buried in his father's tomb with eight sarcophagi located in front of Laleli Mosque in Laleli district.

**Sultan Mustafa IV:** He is buried in his father's Hamidiye Tomb with twenty sarcophagi located opposite to Vakıf Hanı in Bahçekapı district.

**Sultan Mahmud II:** He is buried in the tomb in the district called Türbe

in Cağaloğlu district. This tomb is also called "The Tomb of Sultan Mahmud."

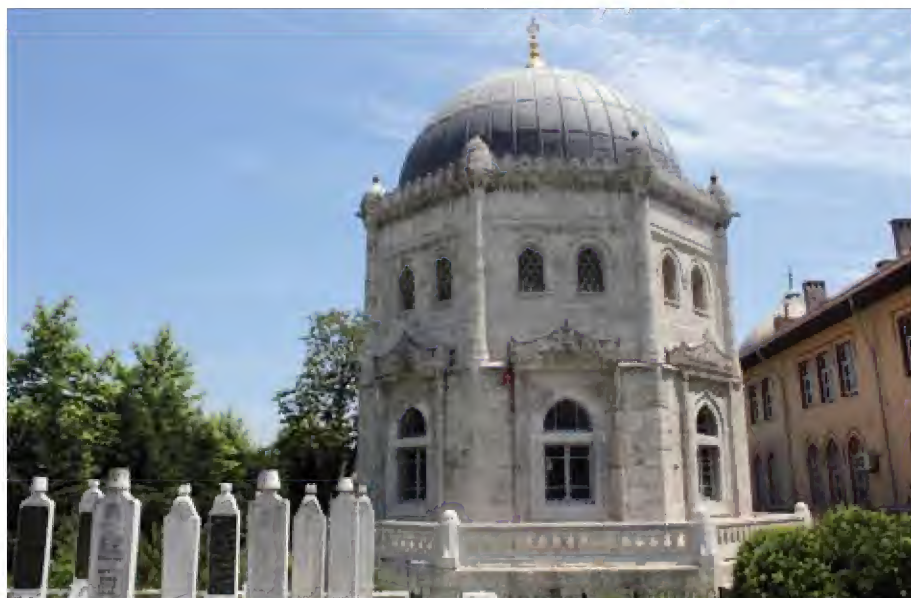
**Sultan Abdülmecid:** He is buried in the tomb of Sultan Selim the Steadfast next to Sultan Selim Mosque.

**Sultan Abdülaziz:** He is buried in the Tomb of Sultan Mahmud in Cağaloğlu district.

**Sultan Murad V:** He is buried in his mother Şevkefza Sultan's tomb located next to the New Mosque in Eminönü district.

**Sultan Abdülhamid II:** He is buried in the Tomb of Sultan Mahmud in Cağaloğlu district.

**Sultan Mehmed V:** He is buried in his tomb located next to the primary school building in Eyüp district





### The Tomb Keeper of Sultan Selim

During the time of Sultan Abdülhamid II, there is a poor tomb keeper working in the Tomb of Sultan Selim. One day, the tomb keeper's pregnant wife said to her husband:

- My dear Husband, I have craving for cherry. You can buy me some cherry on your way back to home in the evening, can't you?

Her husband said "Ok!" and went to the tomb. However, because he did not have any money, he could not buy any cherries. His wife asked when he came back to home:

- You were going to buy me some cherry, did you forget?

The man felt embarrassed and could not say that he had no money. He

said, "I will buy tomorrow inshallah, my lady!" The next day after the afternoon prayer, he began to think about what he could do. He had no money in his pocket for a kilo of cherry. Under such distress, he knocked on the sarcophagus of Sultan Yavuz Selim with the broomstick in his hand and said:

- And they say you are a saint. Hah! I am at your service in your tomb for years, and I get no benefit. My pregnant wife at home asks for a kilo of cherry, and I have no money to pay for it.

He returned empty handed to his wife who was waiting for cherry at home, and his embarrassment was much more than the previous day. On the third day, he saw a military officer waiting for him in front of the tomb:

- "Gentleman, are you the tomb keeper?" the officer asked. .

- "Yes, I am" the man replied faintheartedly.

- Come along! Our emperor Sultan Abdülhamit asked for you!

The man felt surprised and scared at the same time. He started to tremble out of fear. The tomb keeper was brought to the presence of Sultan Abdülhamit. Sultan asked solicitously:

- Tell me! What happened in the tomb of my grandfather Yavuz yesterday?

The tomb keeper replied stutteringly out of fear:

- Nothing happened, Sir!

- O man, the tomb keeper! I am asking you what happened in my grandfather's tomb yesterday. Tell me at once!

The poor tomb keeper told in fear what happened the previous day:

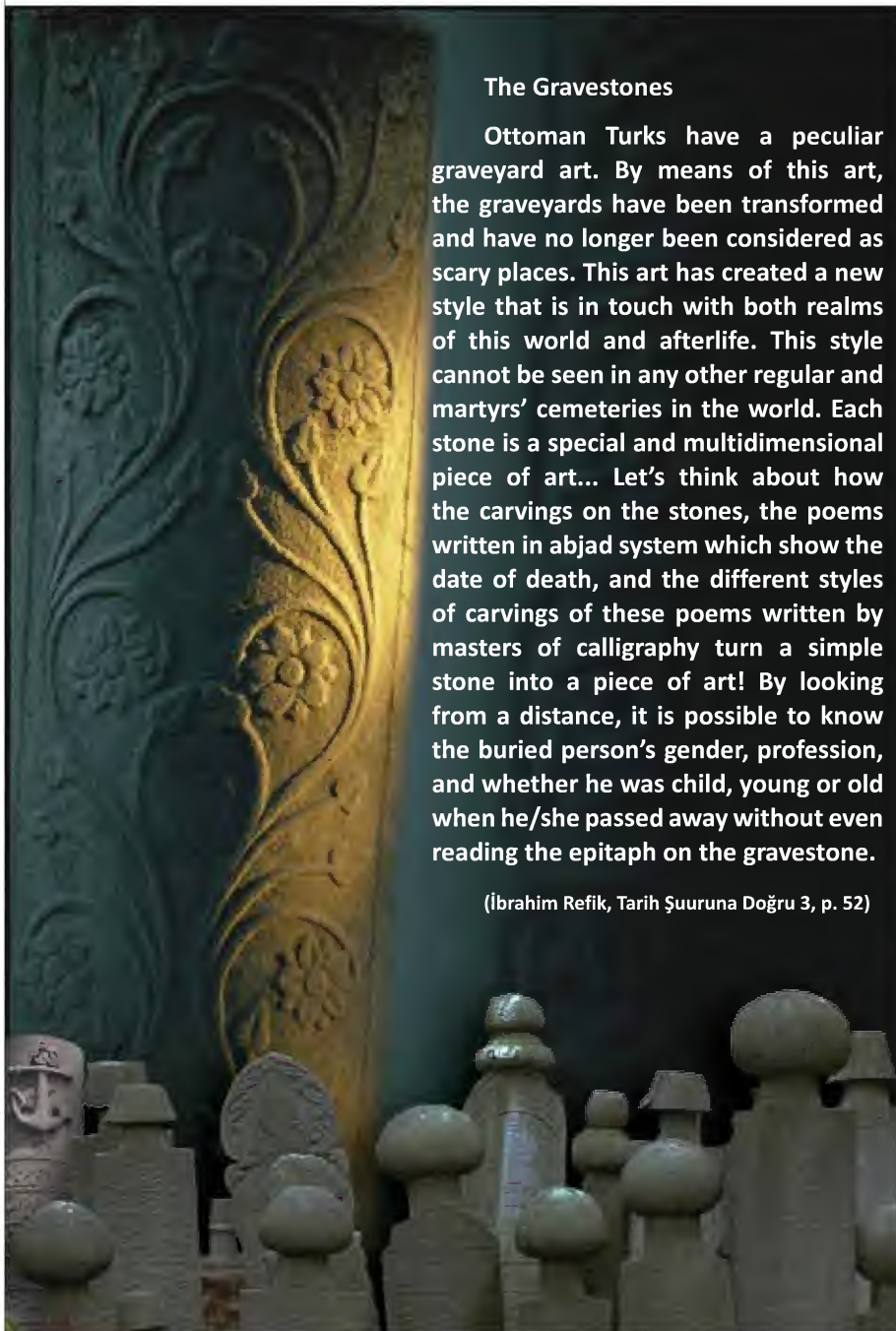
- Sir! My wife is pregnant, she has been asking for cherry for the last two days and I could not buy it. At last, I knocked on the sarcophagus of our sultan with the broomstick in my hand, reproached, and complained a little bit.

Sultan Abdülhamit understood the tomb keeper, smiled and commanded him to be given a bag of gold. The salary of the tomb keeper was doubled. Sultan Abdülhamit said to the tomb keeper:

- If you ever need something, do not bother my dear late grandfather! You knocked on my grandfather's sarcophagus, and he knocked on my head all night long, and did not let me sleep. He scolded me saying, "Why don't you take care of my tomb keeper?" □







### The Gravestones

Ottoman Turks have a peculiar graveyard art. By means of this art, the graveyards have been transformed and have no longer been considered as scary places. This art has created a new style that is in touch with both realms of this world and afterlife. This style cannot be seen in any other regular and martyrs' cemeteries in the world. Each stone is a special and multidimensional piece of art... Let's think about how the carvings on the stones, the poems written in abjad system which show the date of death, and the different styles of carvings of these poems written by masters of calligraphy turn a simple stone into a piece of art! By looking from a distance, it is possible to know the buried person's gender, profession, and whether he was child, young or old when he/she passed away without even reading the epitaph on the gravestone.

(İbrahim Refik, Tarih Şuuruna Doğru 3, p. 52)



# BEFORE THE OTTOMANS

- ❖ FETHIYE MOSQUE
- ❖ GUL MOSQUE
- ❖ KALENDERHANE MOSQUE
- ❖ ZEYREK MOSQUE
- ❖ KARIYE MOSQUE
- ❖ BASILICA CISTERN
- ❖ GALATA TOWER
- ❖ KIZKULESI (MAIDEN TOWER)
- ❖ VALENS AQUEDUCT
- ❖ OBELISKS



## THOSE WHO HAVE FOUND LIFE IN ISLAM



*Byzantine Historian Niketas said for the Crusaders who invaded Constantinople in 1206: "Those who vowed to walk on Christian lands without shedding Christian blood, those who vowed only to attack Muslims, committed the cruelest looting and the crime in Constantinople. Those who vowed not to marry so long as they are carrying Cross on their shoulders raped our nuns who devoted themselves to God. Those who acted for vengeance of Holy Grave in Jerusalem did not abstain from stamping their feet on the cross, just for gold and silver." (Önder KAYA, Cihan Payitahtı İstanbul 2500 Yıllık Tarihi, p. 76.)*



## FETHIYE MOSQUE

Fethiye Mosque is located in Fethiye district in Fatih county in Istanbul. It was built towards the end of 13<sup>th</sup> century by the order of Michael Doukas Glabas Tarchaniotes. By the conquest of Istanbul, it started to be used as the office of patriarchate in 1454. Upon the conquests of Georgia and Azerbaijan in 1590, it transformed into a mosque in memory of these conquests. While transforming it into a mosque, the abscissa section of the church was demolished and in its place, a prayer niche (*mihrab*) was built towards the direction of *qiblah*. In addition to this, a minaret and a madrasah was constructed. The mosque was restored in 1845. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a primary

school was built in place of the madrasah, and outer court walls of the *kulliyah* (social complex) were also demolished.

After the proclamation of the Turkish republic, this mosque was changed into a museum between the years 1936 and 1938 just as Ayasofya Mosque was. In 1955, mosaics and frescoes were revealed by the Byzantine Institute of America, the arch built by Turks was disassembled and columns were rebuilt in accordance with its old plan. It was reopened to worship as a mosque in 1960s.

It is possible to see writings in Greek on the mosaics inside the mosque and on the walls of the mosque built from both stone and brick. □





## GUL (ROSE) MOSQUE

It is estimated that Hagia Theodosia Church was built in the Byzantine period in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century.

It is considered that its transformation into a mosque was took place during the time of the Sultan Bayezid II. The minaret of the mosque was built by Sultan Selim II, and the mosque was restored by Sultan Mahmud II, and a *hünkâr mahfili* (a special section for the sultan) was added.

*Sıbyan mektebi* (primary school) which was built by Sultan Mahmud II's daughter Adile Sultan, was used as a public library for a while.

A nice incident about the name of the mosque is narrated:

The day before the conquest of Istanbul was the feast day of Theodosia. A ceremony was performed in the church with the attendance of a crowded group. Participants of the ceremony brought flowers and roses, and prayed God to protect the city from Turks. Maybe because of God's mercy on them and Maybe because He accepted their prayers in a better way, the city was conquered by Turks. When the Ottoman soldiers saw the roses and flowers spread everywhere in the church, they named it as "Gul (Rose) Mosque." □



## KALENDERHANE MOSQUE

The Mosque is located next to the Valens Aqueduct on the left hand side of the road from Vezneciler to Süleymaniye. It is estimated that the church was built between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was used for different purposes throughout its history. The building, which was used as a church and abbey in the Byzantine era, was transformed into a Roman Catholic Church in the time of the invasion of the Byzantium by Latin.

It was transformed into a *zawiya* (a small Islamic dervish lodge) by Sul-

tan Mehmet the Conqueror, and given to Kalenderi dervishes. They used the building as a madrasah. The name Kalenderhane comes from this incident.

In the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was transformed into a mosque by **Babüssaade Ağası Beşir Ağa**. It was damaged in a huge fire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and restored in 1854. In 1930 its minaret was destroyed by a lightning strike. After this unfortunate incident, the mosque remained dilapidated, and in 1968, it was restored and opened to worship. □



## ZEYREK MOSQUE

The mosque, which has a beautiful Golden horn view, is located in Zeyrek district in Fatih County in Istanbul. Zeyrek is the area that is known as the area of abbeys during the Byzantine times. The first church was built there by the order of the wife of Ioannes II Komnenos (John the Beautiful), Eirene (Irene of Hungary) in the first quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It is the church of one of the largest abbeys of Byzantine, Pantokrator Monastery. After the death of his wife, the emperor built another church there. Pantokrator Monastery was composed of these two churches and a small chapel. During the Latin invasion, Catholic priests confiscated the monastery of the second largest and oldest Byzantine church in Istanbul after Hagia Sophia.

Upon the conquest of Istanbul by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror, the monastery was transformed into a madrasa, and the first madrasa of Istanbul was opened there. The Church was opened to worship as a mosque and was named as Zeyrek Mosque after the name of the first professor of the madrasa, Molla Zeyrek Mehmet Efendi.

The mosque, which was underwent an extensive restoration at the end of the 18th century, is covered by five domes, and has a minaret with one balcony (şerefe). The floorings, which were discovered during the restoration activities began in 1966, are one of the rarest examples survived from the Byzantine era. Today, only the southern part of the mosque is open for worship





## KARIYE MOSQUE (CHORA CHURCH)



The word “khora” means “the rural areas, countryside” in Greek. For this reason, the name Kariye is given to this mosque.

It is known that there was a small chapel outside the city walls during the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Chora Church was built by Justinianus (between 527- 565) in place of this chapel.

Because it was close to the Blachernae Palace, for a while, it was used as the palace chapel for the important religious ceremonies. The church that was rebuilt towards the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century was destroyed during the Latin invasion (1204- 1261).

The church was restored again in the time of the Andronikos II (1282-

1328) and was decorated with mosaics and frescoes.

Kariye was continued to be used as a church after the conquest. In 1511, Grand Vizier Hadım Atik Ali Pasha plastered over the mosaics and transformed the church into a mosque by building a minaret.

The mosque was transformed into a museum in 1945, and by means of the works of the Byzantine Institute of America, the plaster was peeled off and the mosaics and frescos were brought into the daylight. This old church differs from the others by these ornamentations. It is one of the oldest churches decorated most with mosaics.

One can visit the Kariye Mosque every day except Wednesday between 09:00 a.m. – 16:30 p.m.. □





## BASILICA CISTERN


Basilica Cistern, which is also known as “Sunken Palace,” was built by Byzantine Emperor Justinian I (527-565) to supply the water need of the palace. It is estimated that the cistern, which looks like a forest of columns with its 336 columns each one of which is 9-meter tall, was built in 540s. The area of the cistern lies over 9,800 square meters and it can hold 100,000 tons of water.

The sculpture of Medusa located in the northwest corner of the cistern attracts the attention of visitors. A tale

about this is narrated in Greek mythology:

Medusa was a young girl who is proud of her black eyes, long hairs, and her beauty. She was in love with Perseus the son of Zeus. Yet, Athena was in love with Perseus at the same time, and she was jealous of Medusa. Hence, Athena cursed Medusa, and transformed her black hair to serpents. From then on, to whomever Medusa looked at, he/she turned into stone. Then Perseus saw her and understood that she was cursed, and beheaded her. He won many wars by holding Medusa head in his hands and turning his enemies into stones. It is narrated that upside down or sideways picture of Medusa started to be engraved on ancient Byzantine sword hilts and pedestals after this incident.

The cistern was restored for the first time in Ottoman Era at the time of Sultan Ahmed III, then during the time of Sultan Abdulhamit II. The cistern which was cleaned by Municipality of Istanbul in 1987 was opened to visits by addition of a walking platform.

Basilica cistern can be visited every weekday between 09.00 am – 17.00 pm 



## GALATA TOWER

Galata, where Genoese lived before the conquest, is located along the opposite shore of the Golden Horn. The tower, which is located in Galata, was a part of the city walls built to protect Galata.

Galata Tower, one of the oldest towers of the world, was first built by Byzantine Emperor **Anastasius** in 528 as a lighthouse. The tower, which was considerably damaged during the Latin Invasion, was rebuilt by Genoese in 1348 from cast stones, and named as “Cristea Turris” (Tower of Christ). The 69.90-meter tall tower was the highest building of the city in its time. The walls of the tower are about 3.75 meter wide. The outer diameter of the tower is 16.45 meters and inner diameter is 8.95 meters.

After it was damaged in an earthquake in 1509, it was restored by the **Architect Hayreddin**.

In the Ottoman Era, it was used as a shelter for a while for the captives working in the shipyard. During the time of **Sultan Murad III**, it was used as an observatory by **Takiyüddin Mehmet Efendi**, yet then it was closed in 1579. During the following years, it was used as an observation tower to spot the fires.

No doubt, one of the most unforgettable memories in the history of Galata Tower took place in 1638 during the time of **Sultan Murad IV**. By using the artificial wings developed by himself, **Hezarfen Ahmet Çelebi** attempted to fly from the Tower to the Hill of Doğancılar in Üsküdar in the Anatolian side of Istanbul.

The Tower took its present shape after the restorations carried out during the time of **Sultan Selim II** and **Sultan Mahmut II**. Today the tower is used as a touristic place and its top floor serves as a restaurant. The balcony of the upper floor surrounding the tower is an ideal place to sight the city. . ■



## THE MAIDEN'S TOWER

The Maiden's Tower, which is one of the symbols of Istanbul, is located on undersea rocks near Üsküdar coasts where Bosphorus meets Marmara Sea.

The piece of land that had been a cape on the Asiatic shores of Istanbul in the ancient times of history in time drifted apart from the coast and the islet on which the Maiden's Tower is located was formed.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the Athenian commander Alcibiades built a tower on that small island to keep the entrance and the exit of the Bosphorus under control,

and to collect tax from the ships. When needed, the area between Sarayburnu and the island could be closed with an iron chain.

That is why the name of the Maiden's tower was Arcla (the little castle) during the Ancient times and the Byzantine Era.

After many years, in 341 BCE, Greek commander **Chares** built a tomb on marble pillars for his deceased wife **Damalis**. For that reason, the castle was also called as Damalis Tower.







Between the years 1143 and 1178, a defensive tower for the protection of the city was built by Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenus.

According to Byzantine historians, **Osman Gazi**'s son **Orhan Gazi** who came to Üsküdar met the messengers sent by his father-in-law **Kantakouzenos** in the Maiden's Tower.

After the conquest of Istanbul, the Maiden's Tower was used for the same purposes during the Ottoman Period. During the most powerful periods of Ottoman Empire, the tower was used as a lighthouse rather than a defensive tower. Moreover, welcoming ceremonies for the navy returning to Istanbul and for the important guests coming to the country were organized by cannon fires from the tower.

After the tower was burnt down in a fire in 1716, it was rebuilt between 1725 and 1726 by **the grand vizier Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Paşa**.

During the cholera outbreak in Istanbul which continued between the years 1830 and 1831, the Maiden's Tower was served as an isolation hospital to prevent the city from the spread of the virus.

Today, the Maiden's Tower serves as a restaurant.

The Maiden's Tower occupies an important place in the culture of Istanbul not just because its architectural style, but also because of the tales and legends about it.

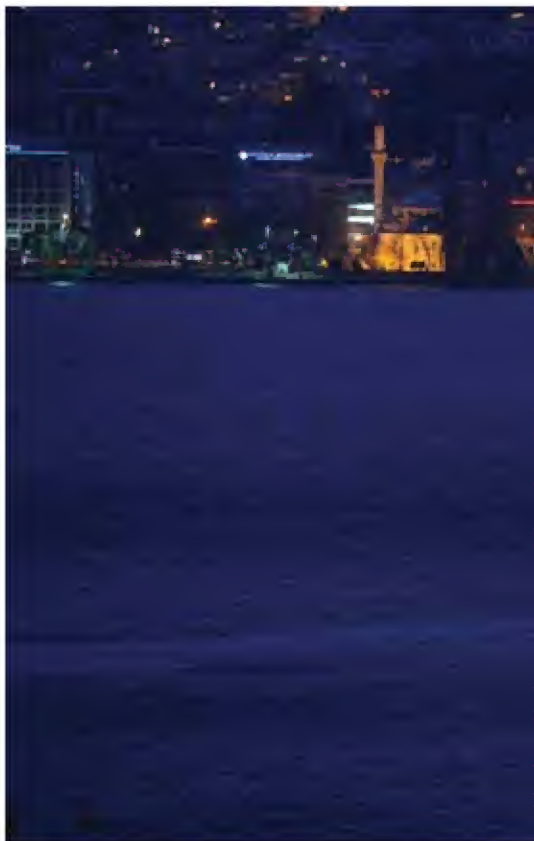
### The Legends about the Maiden's Tower

One of the oldest tales about the Maiden's Tower goes back to the time of when Istanbul, or Byzantium as it was called at that time, was under the sovereignty of Athens. According to this tale, Kingdom of Athens sent 40 ships under the command of **Admiral Chares** to protest Istanbul from a possible attack of **King Philip of Macedon**. When his beloved wife Damalis passed away, Admiral Chares buried his wife in a tomb in the Maiden's Tower by carving the rocks.

According to another legend, the young Leandros fell in love with a young lady in the Maiden's Tower. Every night, the young lady built a fire on the rocks, where the Maiden's Tower is located, to guide Leandros who swims from the opposite coast. At a stormy night, the fire lit by the young lady went out. Leandros could not find the rocks and lost his way. He drowned in the cold waters of the Bosphorus. The young lady could not bear Leandros's loss and committed suicide.

The most famous story of the Maiden's Tower is as follows:

Byzantine Emperor had a daughter whom he loved very much and declared her birthday a festival in the country. Every year, the birthday of the princess was celebrated with spectacular events. The



Emperor asked the scholars to train her daughter to become ready for the throne. Yet, the oldest scholar prophesized that the daughter of the Emperor was going to die before her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday by a snake-bite. Upon this, the Emperor restored the tower on the small island in the middle of the sea, and settled her daughter down there. Years passed. The daughter of the Emperor was soon going to turn 18. Yet as if proving the inevitability of destiny, a snake that went out from a basket of grape which had been sent to the tower



© Halit Ömer CAMCI

bit and poisoned the princess. The Emperor became very sad for her daughter's death and understood the inevitability of destiny. He thought that if his daughter were buried, she would be food for the snakes. For this reason, he mummified his daughter's body and put her in a brass coffin. He, then, commanded the coffin to be placed on one of the high walls of the Hagia Sophia. He thought that he could at least protect his daughter's dead body from the snakes.

Today, there are two holes on that coffin. It is narrated that the snake did not leave the princess in peace even after her death. ([www.kizkulesi.com.tr](http://www.kizkulesi.com.tr))

**Evliya Çelebi** tells the following tale about the tower in his *Seyahatname*:

It is narrated that during the time of **Sultan Bayezid-i Veli**, a friend of God who lived in the Maiden's Tower pulled the hems of his robe, sit on the water, and went to Sarayburnu every day, and gave lecture to the Sultan in the palace □

## VALENS AQUEDUCT

Valens Aqueduct which is located between the two hills - on one of these hills Istanbul University is located, and on the other one Fatih Mosque is - is an example of Byzantine Period monuments. Valens Aqueduct, which is known as Bozdoğan Kemerleri today, was called Hadrianus Aqueduct as well.

It is estimated that the aqueduct was built during the time of the Roman **Emperor Hadrianus** (117-138) or **Valens** (364-378). Valens Aqueduct was used to provide water to the palaces, to the Bath of Achilles, and Basilica Cistern, and for irrigation in the city of Byzantium in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The Aqueduct was restored during the times of Iustinus II (576), Constantine V (741-775) and Basil II in 1019.

After the conquest, it was restored by **Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror**, and some additions were made to the duct. The duct was also repaired during the times of **Sultan Bayezid II**, **Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent**, and **Sultan Mustafa II**.

It is estimated that the length of the aqueduct during the Byzantine period was longer than 1 kilometer. It is located 63 meters above sea level, and is about 28-29 meters high. The width of the aqueduct varies between 7 and 8 meters, and its foundations are approximately 5-6 meters below the surface. The section of the aqueduct which survived to this day is 921 meters long. .





## OBELISKS

The obelisk in Sultanahmet Square was first set up by **Thutmose III**, one of the pharaohs of Egypt, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Its height is 18.45 meters (24.87 meters together with the base) and it is made of pink granite. On each face of the column, the victories of Pharaoh Thutmose III, and the sacrifices he offered to Amun-Ra were narrated. It weighs about 200 tons.

This monumental column was brought to Istanbul by the Roman Emperor **Theodosius I** in 390. That is why it is also known as the Obelisk of Theodosius. In the west face of the column, Theodosius is portrayed while he is sitting on his throne with his wife and children and accepting the messengers.

In the base of the Obelisk, the following passages is written in Greek and Latin:

The passage in Greek is written through the words of a narrator:

“This column with four sides which lay on the earth, only the emperor Theodosius dared to lift again its burden; Proclos was invited to execute his order; and this great column stood up in 32 days.”

The Latin passage is written from the mouth of the stone:

*“Though formerly I opposed resistance, I was ordered to obey the serene masters and to carry their palm, once the tyrants had been overcome. All things yield to Theodosius and to his everlasting descendants. This is true of me too - I was mastered and overcome in three times ten days and raised towards the upper air, under governor Proculus.”*



### The Walled Obelisk

The obelisk which is located in Sultanahmet Square was built in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century. Because it was restored by **Constantine VII** in 944, it is also known as Constantine Obelisk. The 32 meters high column was constructed of cut stones.

As reported in the older sources, the column was covered with gilded bronze plaques which portray the victories of **Basil I**, the grandfather of Constantine VII. Moreover, there was a globe at the top of the obelisk. Yet, during the Fourth Crusaders, the gilded bronze plaques were stolen and melted by the Crusader army.



### The Million Stone

The Stone which is located opposite to Hagia Sophia Mosque, close to the Basilica Cistern, and next to the tramway road was used as a “mile-marker.” It was accepted as the starting point of all roads in Byzantine, and the central point while measuring the distances of



other cities to Byzantium. It is estimated that the stone was erected in the 4<sup>th</sup> century by **the Emperor Constantine I**.

Its shape during the Byzantine Period was much different than the shape of the obelisk today. At the time, there were four doors facing to each direction, and a dome that was based on four columns.

### The Serpent Column

The Serpent Column is located in Sultanahmet Square. This monument was set up in the Temples of Apollo to commemorate the victory of 31 Greek city-states united against the Persians in the Battle of Plataea in 479 BCE. This column was made by melting the bronze booties they gained in the war. Later on, it was brought to Istanbul by the Byzantine Emperor **Constantine I** (324- 337 CE).

The older version of the Serpent Column was very different than its current shape. There was a golden bowl supported by three serpent heads with open mouths. It is estimated that this bowl on the top of the column was plundered during the Latin Invasion. The names of 31 Greek city states are written on these serpents. The column was 8 meters high at first, but today it is 5.30 meters high and the heads of the serpents are lost. One of these lost heads has been found



and exhibited in Istanbul Archeological Museum.

### The Column of Goths

The Column is located in Gülhane Park, which used to be the garden of harem of Topkapı Palace. The date of the building is estimated to be in the 4<sup>th</sup> cen-



tury. It is one of the oldest monuments left from the Roman Era. Its height is 18.5 meters.

There is a header with eagle relievio on top of the one-piece marble column. The column is named after the Latin passage written on its tablet: "**FORTUNAE REDUCI OB DEVICTUS GOTHOS:** To Fortuna who returns because of the victory over the Goths."

As it is understood from this tablet, the victory of **Constantine I** or **Claudius II** over the Goths is narrated on the column.



### The Cost of an Obelisk to a Nation

Approximately two hundred years ago khedive of Egypt, Kavalalı Mehmet Ali Pasha played a trick on France and England. In the year 1801, near Alexandria there were two columns sculpted by Sesostris in ancient times. One of these columns was lying on the soft sands of the desert, and the other was still standing straight against time. Both of these solid columns were known as the **“columns of Cleopatra”** because they were taken from their first place where they were in ruins and brought to the temple built by Cleopatra in her name. Two giant stones witnessed to thousands of years.

One day, Kavalalı was visiting the ruins with the senior officers of France and Britain. When they came near to the columns, he asked the generals of both parties:

- Choose one of these two columns.

At that time, France just withdrew from Egypt, and Britain was having new plans over Egypt. That is why both generals chose the standing column for the sake of their states and nations. Yet, Kavalalı made the final decision, and the lying column was decided to be given to the British, and the standing one was for the French. Then Kavalalı stated the following historical words with the natural



comfort and confidence of coming from the tradition of a “big state”:

- This is a gift from Devlet-i Aliyye (Ottoman Empire). Take it to your country at once.

- !?

What happened then?

British senior officials established a commission and examined the issue of shipment. The shipment of the column to the Britain was going to be a source of pride against French, but the budget did not include enough amount for this shipment. Thereupon a donation fund was established. And an old French battleship was bought with the collected fund. However, the plans were wrong and 250-ton column could never be shipped to the Britain, and the British economy had great loss.

France was just come out of revolution in those years, and the young state wanted to show its power. **Charles X of France** gave orders to Champollion, the delegate of Egypt, for the shipment of the column. He wanted to adorn the Paris Square with this column. French officers, who took courage from clumsiness of British, took the job seriously. They started to build a special ship in Toulon, and at the same time, they took some precautions in Egypt to enable the shipment of the column. The ship was going to be made from wood, and to have a sailing. Just like the ships of Julius Caesar, Au-

gust, and Constantine. The column was rectangular parallelepiped, and it was impossible to move it a few meters, let alone the shipment. That is why they began to cover the column as a circle. After months, the column was packed in a wooden cylinder. Now, it was possible to roll it in the desert conditions, and to move it to the Mediterranean via Nile, and finally send to Paris from Seine. And they fulfilled their plans, yet the French suffered many obstacles.

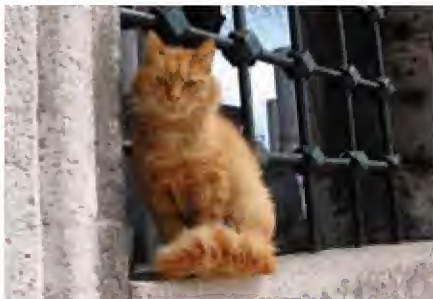
The ship built in Toulon departed with 250 thousand kilos of ballast. It anchored to an appropriate coast of Nile. In order to load a meter of the column to the ship, approximately 10 tons of ballast was unloaded from the ship. However, there was an engineering mistake, and at the end of the loading, the ship went aground. Besides, Nile got shallow because of the ballast unloaded from the ship. Rescuing the ship took 7 months. About a thousand people were employed only for this job for 4 years, and the government budget had deficit for the following seven years. Modernizing France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could not be as the Rome or Byzantium of ancient times, because this column, which is still standing upon the ruins of the court in Paris, is shorter than the obelisks in Navona Square in Rome, and Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul (22 meters). (İskender Pala, *Tavan Arası*, p. 41- 43.)

## EVEN ANIMALS ARE HAPPY IN ISTANBUL

Austrian diplomat **Baron W. Wratislaw** who visited our country in the 16<sup>th</sup> century narrates the following,

“There are huge gardens surrounded with huge walls in Istanbul. Many cats wait on these walls for generous people to feed them. Because it is a tradition among Turks to cook tripe and offal in cauldrons, and sell it by shouting

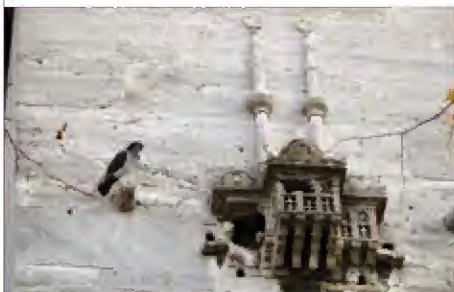
walls. Because these people who treat some manners that are not among the religious commands as Allah’s commands



believe that they will gain Allah the Almighty’s pleasure and contentedness by giving food to the cats, dogs, fishes, birds, and other living creatures of God as charity. Maybe as a result of this belief, they consider killing the captured



and walking around the city. You can see more than fifty or sixty dogs following the peddler. Turks distribute the food they bought from those peddlers among the dogs equally, and they do not forget to give a share to the cats waiting on the



birds a big sin, and believe that they can gain Allah the Almighty’s favor by buying and emancipating them as if paying liberation money. They throw bread crumbs to the sea to feed the fish.”



# MUSEUMS

- ❖ ISTANBUL MILITARY MUSEUM
- ❖ ISTANBUL NAVAL MUSEUM
- ❖ ISTANBUL ARCHEOLOGY MUSEUMS
- ❖ MINIATURK
- ❖ YEDIKULE FORTRESS



## ISTANBUL MILITARY MUSEUM

Hagia Irene Church, which is located in the first courtyard of Topkapı Palace, was used as an armory at one time. This place served in that way from the conquest of Istanbul until the time of Sultan Ahmet III. In 1726, by the order of **Sultan Ahmet III**, it was reorganized as a place where people can visit and see the weapons. Later on, in 1846, it was turned into museum in modern sense, and during this process of transformation into a museum, **Damat Fethi Ahmet Pasha**, an Ottoman politician and arsenal marshal, strived greatly.

Upon the break out of the World War II, the weaponry collection in Hagia Irene transferred to Niğde and taken under protection. After the end of the war, the collection was brought back to Istanbul and placed into Maçka Armory in 1949. After 1959, it is re-opened to

visits in the Gymnasium of Harbiye Mektebi. By the increase in the size of the collection in time, the building became insufficient and the whole Old Harbiye building was restored and opened as a museum in 1966.

The collection of 5,000 pieces of weapon and munitions chosen from among approximately 50,000 pieces were used in the Ottoman army between 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This collection, which is exhibited according to the subjects, kinds and periods of its weaponry, is one of the most important military collections of the world.

You can enjoy listening to the Mehter concerts during the open days of the military museum between 15.00 and 16.00. The museum can be visited each day of the week except Mondays and Tuesdays between 09.00 and 17.00.



Орудие капрала Сейида



## ISTANBUL NAVAL MUSEUM

Istanbul Naval Museum, which is located opposite to Beşiktaş Wharf, is under the authority of Turkish Naval Forces. It was established in 1897 in Tersane-i Amire (Shipyard of Ottoman Empire) in Kasımpaşa by the order of **Ottoman Minister of Navy Hasan Hüsnü Pasha**.

Upon the break out of the World War II, the artifacts exhibited in this Museum were transferred to Konya for the purpose of protection, just as the pieces exhibited in Istanbul Military Museum. After the end of the war, they were brought back to Istanbul and opened to visitors in Dolmabahçe Mosque. The Museum was moved to its present location in 1961.

The tomb in the İskele Square right next to the Museum is the tomb of the great Turkish sailor **Kapudan Pasha Hayreddin Barbarossa** (1466-1546).

Three storey building of the Museum lies over about 20,000 square metre. Approximately four thousand pieces chosen among approximately 20,000 pieces are exhibited in four huge hall and seventeen room in the building. The Museum includes sailor uniforms, navy models, paintings about the naval history, and weapons such as grenades, torpedos, and guns.

The sultanate galley of **Sultan Mehmet IV** (1648-1687) which is exhibited in the section of sultanate boats collections is the oldest marine vessel survived to this day. Its length is 40 meters and its width is 5.90 meters. This 140-ton galley used to be moved through 24 pairs of oar (each oar was pulled by three people, so  $24 \times 2 \times 3 = 144$  oarsman used to be employed to move this galley)

In the yard of the museum, there are artilleries from different periods. Moreover, the ruins of German battleship, which sank in our shore during the World War II, is exhibited here.

The Naval Museum can be visited between 09.00 and 17.00 every day of the week except Mondays and Tuesdays.



## ISTANBUL ARCHEOLOGY MUSEUMS

The curiosity of collecting artifact begins with Sultan Mehmet II (the Conqueror) in the Ottomans. Istanbul Archeology Museum is one of the most important Ottoman heritages left to the Republic of Turkey.

The Museum was first established by **Damat Fethi Ahmet Pasha, an Ottoman politician and arsenal marshal** in 1856 in Hagia Irene. At that time, it was named as Mecma-i Eshia-i Atika and Mecma-i Asar-i Atika (The Collection of Old Weapons and the Collection of Old Artifacts).

After 1869, Hagia Irene started to become too small to hold the objects of the Museum, which was called “Müze-i Hümayun (The Imperial Museum).” That is why the objects were moved to

the Tiled Kiosk (or Tiled Pavilion Museum) and kept there.

With the contributions of Saffet Pasha and Ahmet Vefik Pasha, the Ministers of Education of the time, the collection of historical artifacts constantly developed.

The museum was re-established in June 13, 1891 by Osman Hamdi Bey, one of the famous Turkish painters and archeologists in its present building under the name “Asar-i Atika Müzesi (the Museum of Old Artifacts)”. The Museum which is located between Topkapı Palace and Gülhane Park is one of the largest museums of the world.

The collections exhibited in the Museum have more than one million





artifacts from Balkans to Africa, from Anatolia and Mesopotamia to Arabian Peninsula and Afghanistan, in other words from all of the civilizations within the borders of Ottoman Empire.

Some of the most important archaeological artifacts of the world such as “Sarcophagus of Alexander the Great” and “Sarcophagus of the Crying Women” were brought to Istanbul by Osman Hamdi Bey between 1887 and 1888 after archaeological excavations in Lebanon.

The building of the Museum was constructed by Alexandre Vallaury, one of the famous architects of the time. The oldest one of the buildings of the museum is the one built by **Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror**, the Tiled Kiosk. Today, it is used as the museum of tiled and ceramic artifacts.

The Museum has a rich library, which contains books about history, archeology, numismatic, and fine arts. Moreover, the Museum has chemistry

laboratory, sculpture repairing office, and photography office.

The opening day of the Archeological Museum, June 13, is celebrated in Turkey as the Museum Curators’ Day. The Museum can be visited between 9.30 and 17.00 every day of the week except Mondays.





## MINIATURK

Minyatür Türkiye Park (Miniature Turkey Park) is one of the biggest miniature parks of the world which lies over 60,000 square meter area. Its construction was started in June 30, 2001, and it was opened to visitors in May 2, 2003.

This beautiful outdoor museum contains 120 models in 1/25 scale chosen from modern Turkey and Ottoman territories.



Fifty-seven of the models exhibited in Miniaturk are from Istanbul, fifty-one of them are from Anatolia, twelve of



them are from the Ottoman territories that are outside of Turkey today.

When you visit Miniaturk, you would feel like going on a trip through the Ottoman lands. You can see Süleymaniye, Selimiye, Hacı Bayram



Mosques, Antalya Yivli Minare Mosque, and Bursa Grand Mosque.

You can walk over Boğaziçi Bridge,



and see the models of Adana Taşköprü, Stari Most and Malabadi Bridges right in front of you.

You can visit the Tomb of Mevlana, Yeşil Türbe (Green Tomb) of Bursa, the



Tomb of Ertuğrul Gazi, and the Tomb of Aşık Pasha and pray to Allah for these great people without leaving Istanbul.

You can visit Safranbolu Houses, Amasya Houses and Mardin Stone Houses at the same time.

You can stop by Çifte Minareli Medrese of Erzurum, Konya Karatay



Medresesi, Hatuniye Medresesi of Karaman, Gök Medrese of Sivas, and İnce Minareli Medrese of Sivas, which can be considered the first universities of Anatolia.

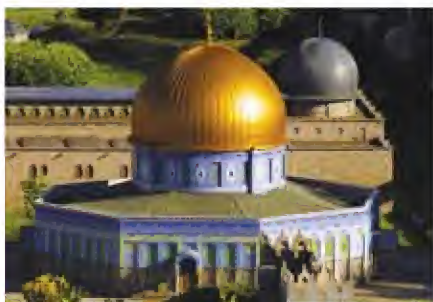


You do not need a tour throughout Turkey to see Hoodoos of Cappadocia, Pamukkale, The Maiden's Tower, and Galata Tower. You do not need, either, a world tour to see the famous Sumela



Monastery, Monumentum Ancyranum, the Church of St. Mary of Blachernae, Temple of Artemis, the Pergamon Altar, and Aspendos.

To see the models of the above-mentioned precious monuments and of many more, you can just stop by Miniaturk.



Miniaturk is open to visitors between 09.00 and 19.00 during the week days, and between 09.00 and 21.00 on weekends. ☐



## YEDIKULE FORTRESS

In order to welcome the foreign guests of the state ostentatiously, **Theodosius I** built a gate called “Golden Gate” to the city walls in 390. After the conquest of Istanbul, a wall with three towers was added to this gate by **Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror**, and in this way, “**Yedikule Fortress**” took its current form.

The names of the seven towers, which gave the fortress its name, are as follows: Northern Pylon Tower, South Pylon Tower, Tower of the Inscriptions, Top Tower, Sultan Ahmed III Tower, Tower of Treasury, and Flag Tower.

After the conquest of Istanbul, Yedikule Fortress was used for a long period as a citadel where state treasury and state archives were kept. It became famous as being a prison for important local and foreign prisoners. The most important statesmen of the time such as **Sultan Osman II**, **Emperor of Trebizond David Komnenos and his sons**, and **Mehmet Giray Khan of Crimean Khanate** were imprisoned in these towers.

The Fortress was restored extensively between 1958 and 1970, and today it is used as a place to organize various cultural activities. You can visit Yedikule Fortress between 09.30 and 16.30 any day of the week except Mondays. ▣





# FOUNTAINS AND PUBLIC FOUNTAINS (SABILS)

- ❖ WATER DAMS
- ❖ GERMAN FOUNTAIN
- ❖ SULTAN AHMET III  
PUBLIC FOUNTAIN
- ❖ SALIHA SULTAN  
PUBLIC FOUNTAIN
- ❖ SULTAN AHMET III  
SQUARE FOUNTAIN





## FOUNTAINS

### Water Civilization

If one examines hundreds of water fountains which have survived to this day, and thinks about hundreds of more water fountains which were destroyed and have not survived to this day because of intentional or unintentional negligence, it can be understood that a great water civilization was established in Istanbul. By this characteristic, Istanbul

can be accepted as a city of water fountains.

In order to satisfy the need for water in Istanbul, water dams were constructed over some streams such as Kağıthane and Alibeyköy streams which are quite far from the city. The water contained behind those dams needed to be transferred to water reservoirs called meksem constructed in places closer to the city through pipelines and aqueducts. This was a task which was almost impossible by the technological means of the time, because there was not any equipment to pump the water. It could be done only by using the power of gravity of earth. Constructing the aqueducts and water canals with a slope measuring one thousandth amazes even the contemporary engineers. The water collected in meksem was distributed to the fountains and the public fountains by means of varying sizes of lüles (pipelines made from fired earth).

Because transfer of water to the city and its distribution to the fountains was so difficult and expensive task, it made people understand the value of water. In order to avoid wasting water, the faucets that we use today were invented. In order to save the pipelines from bursting because of the pressure created by keeping the faucets off for a long time, water gages were constructed in various parts of the city.





### Water Dams

The seven water dams constructed during the Ottoman period in Belgrade Forest are as follows:

#### The Great Dam (Büyük Bent)

which was constructed during the period of Sultan Mahmut I (in 1748)

#### The Dark Dam (Karanlık Bent)

which was constructed by Sultan Osman II in 1620

#### The Ayvat Dam (Ayvat Bent)

which was constructed by Sultan Mustafa III in 1766

#### The Kirazlı Dam (Kirazlı Bent)

which was constructed by Sultan Mahmut II in 1818

#### The Topuzlu Dam (Topuzlu Bent)

which was constructed by Sultan Mahmut II in 1750

#### The Valide Dam (Valide Bent)

which was constructed by Mihrişah Valide Sultan in 1797

**The New Dam or The Dam of Mahmut II (Yeni Bent)** which was constructed by Sultan Mahmut II in 1839

### Fountains and Public Fountains (Sebils)

The issue of the fountains and the public fountains (*sebils*) in Istanbul is such a wide one that it can be separate topic of a book.

The fountains and the public fountains (*sebils*) are monumental works that were meticulously constructed like a temple as a result of the motivation of the Prophet's saying "**the most superior charity is to give water.**" In this section of the book, we would like to introduce the square fountains and public fountains built at the most central places of the city. The difference between a fountain and a



The Ayvat Dam (Ayvat Bent) constructed by Sultan Mustafa III in 1766



Tophane Fountain

public fountain is that those who worked at the public fountains would serve the public not just water but also other drinks. In the Ramadan nights and in the nights of holidays, “honey sherbet” used to be offered to the public from the taps of the public fountains. There also used to be endowments that financially supported some sebils to offer the public beverages and water cooled down by snow during the hot days of the year. Hatice Valide Sultan, who constructed Yeni Mosque and its social complex, also founded such an endowment.

Some other famous Ottoman fountains and public fountains in addition to the ones which will be introduced this section can be listed as follows:

**Tophane Fountain** (1732) constructed by Sultan Mahmut I

**Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Paşa Fountain** (1732) constructed in Ortaköy Square

**Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa Fountain** (1734) constructed in Kabataş

**Mihrişah Sultan Fountains** built one in front of Küçüksu palace (1806) and another one in Eyüp (1801)

**Hüseyin Avni Paşa Fountain** (1874) located in Üsküdar

**Abdülhamit I Fountain** (1783) located in Emirgan

**Mehmet Emin Ağa Public Fountain** (1740) located in Dolmabahçe

**Koca Yusuf Paşa Public Fountain** (1786) located in Kabataş

**Sinan Paşa Public Fountain** (End of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) located in Divanyolu

**Rabia Gülnuş Sultan Public Fountain** (1708-1710) located in Üsküdar

**Sultan Abdülhamit I Public Fountain** (This sebil which was constructed in 1777 was moved to its current place in 1920) which was moved in front of Zeyrek Sultan Mosque.

### Sultan Ahmet III Public Fountain

This fountain located in front of Bab-ı Hümayun, i.e. the gate entrance of Topkapı Palace, is the most beautiful example of Ottoman square fountain architecture and one of the symbols of Istanbul. The fountain which is one of the most beautiful architectures of Tulip Period was constructed by **Head Architect Mehmet Ağa** in 1729. There are faucets on the oval corners of the fountain.

The twenty-eight couplet ode engraved around the fountain was written by **Poet Seyyid Vehbi** to praise the beauty of the fountain.

On the side of the fountain which faces Ayasofya (Hagia Sophia) Mosque, the following lines are written:

**Tarihi Sultan Ahmed'in cari ze-ban-ı lüleden**

**This fountain speaks to you in the verses of Sultan Ahmed**

**Aç Besmeleyle iç suyu Han Ahmed'e eyle dua**

**Turn on the tap in the name of Allah (s.w.t), Drink water and pray (Allah) for Sultan Ahmed.**

Sultan Ahmet II was both the author and the calligrapher of these lines. When the letters of the second line are added according to abjad system, it reveals the hijri year of the construction of the fountain (1141 AH).

Edmondo de Amicis, an Italian man of letters, was maybe the one who expressed his feelings best among the foreign travelers who were astonished by the beauty of this fountain. He said about the fountain:



“It is one of the richest and most original of the monuments of Turkish art. But, more than a monument, it is a jewel in marble, that a gallant Sultan placed on the forehead of his Stambouli in a moment of affection. I believe that none but a woman can describe it. My pen is not fine enough to trace its image. It does not look like a fountain at first. It is in the form of a square temple, with a Chinese roof, extending its undulating border far beyond the walls, and giving it a pagodalike appearance. At each of the four angles there is a small round tower, furnished with little grated windows, or rather four charming kiosks, corresponding to which there are, upon the roof, four slender cupolas, each one surmounted by a graceful pinnacle; the whole encircling a larger cupola in the midst...

There is not a space as big as a hand that is not carved, and gilded and embroidered. It is a prodigy of grace, richness and patience, to be kept under a glass shade j a thing made apparently not only for the eye, but which must have a taste, an odor of its own ; a jewel case, that one would like to open, and discover some pearl of price enshrined within. Time has in part dimmed the gilding, blurred the colors, and rusted the marble. What must this colossal jewel have been when first unveiled to the eye, a hundred and sixty years ago? But old and faded as it is, it still holds the first place among all the smaller marvels of Constantinople...” (Edmondo de Amicis, Constantinople, trans. by Caroline Tilton, 1894, p. 171-172; Edmondo de Amicis, İstanbul, 1874, trans. Prof. Dr. Beynün AKYAVAŞ, p. 165-166)







### Sultan Ahmet III Square Fountain

Sultan Ahmet III had **Head Architect Mehmet Ağa** construct this fountain, which is located in Üsküdar Docks Square, in 1729. It is the twin of the famous fountain found in front of Topkapı Palace. This fountain, which had been first constructed by the seashore, was moved to its current place during the construction works in the square in 1943-1945.

The inscription on the side of the fountain facing the sea was written by Sultan Ahmet III and the famous grand vizier of the Tulip Period Nevşehirli Damat İbrahim Paşa. The inscription which was written by Sultan Ahmet III's own calligraphy is as follows:

**Dedi Han Ahmet ile bile İbrahim tarihini**

Ahmed Han, together with İbrahim, said the date

**Suvarı âlemi dest-i Muhammed ile cevâdullah**

God's generosity watered the world from the hand of [the Prophet] Muhammed

The inscriptions on other sides of the fountain was penned by Poet Nedim, Şakir, and Rahmi.



The Fountain of Sultan Abdülhamit II in Gülhane

### German Fountain

The German Fountain is located in Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul across from the Mausoleum of Sultan Ahmed I. It was constructed in 1900 to commemorate the second anniversary of the German Emperor Wilhelm II's visit to Istanbul in 1898. It was built in Germany, then transported piece by piece and reassembled in its current site in 1900.

The fountain, which originally was planned to be opened on September 1, 1900 on the twenty fifth anniversary of Sultan Abdulhamid II's ascendance to the throne, could not be opened because of delays and officially opened on January 27, 1901, or on the birthday of Wilhelm II.

The Neo-Renaissance style of fountain's octagonal dome stands on eight green marble columns, and the dome's interior is covered with golden mosaics. The Neo-Renaissance style of the octagonal fountain stands on a high floor with a staircase of eight stairs, seven brass

faucets and, covering its reservoir, there is a dome which has eight porphyry columns. The exterior bronze green dome, which stands these over eight porphyry columns, and the dome's interior surface are decorated with golden mosaics as well as with Abdülhamid II's tughra and Wilhelm II's symbol.





### **Saliha Sultan Public Fountain**

This fountain, which is located in front of Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Mosque, next to Unkapanı Bridge in Azapkapı, was constructed by Mimar Mustafa Ağa in 1732.

There is a nice tale narrated about the construction of the fountain:

According to the story, a poor family living in that neighborhood had a daughter called Saliha. When the little Saliha was filling her water pot from a fountain, the heavy pot slipped from her hands and broke. She got very sad and started to cry. Coincidentally that very moment, Sultan Mehmed IV's wife Rabia Gülnuş Sultan was passing by and saw the little girl crying. Rabia Gülnuş Sultan came to the little girl and asked

her what had happened. She wanted to give the little girl some money to buy a new pot. However, Saliha did not accept the money and said

- I was not crying for the pot but for my own bungling. I could not manage to fill the pot without breaking it.

Rabia Gülnuş Sultan liked her response, brought the girl to the palace, and raised the girl in the palace. This little girl trained in the palace later married Sultan Mustafa II and became Saliha Sultan, the mother of Sultan Mahmut I. At the place of the small fountain, where Saliha Sultan was filling her pot when she was a child, Sultan Mahmut I asked the Architect Mustafa Ağa in 1732 - 1733 to build a beautiful fountain.





### The Story of a Fountain

Once there was a man named **Gül (Rose) Ahmet** in Üsküdar. Gül Ahmet who was a rude man contrary to his name listened to the talks in a poetry gathering. Because the poets used heteronymous or synonymous words in their poems, he said:

- These poets' words are like rubber. It means whatever you want from them.

Although the poets who were present in the gathering were hurt by Gül Ahmet's words, they could not say anything because of his status. However, one of them thought, "One day, I will take my revenge for what he said about us."

Time passed and Gül Ahmet constructed a fountain. In accordance with the customs of the time, he asked the

poets to write a line showing the date of construction when it was calculated by abjad system. The poet who planned to take revenge from Gül Ahmet wrote a line for the construction date of the fountain. Gül Ahmet had the line inscribed on the fountain. The line was as follows:

**"Gel Gül Ahmet çeşmesinden iç gül-âb âsâ suyu"** which means "Come, drink from the water of the fountain of Gül Ahmet which is rose water." According to abjad system, the date of the construction of the fountain pointed out in this line is 910 AH or 1505 CE.

In the opening ceremony, Gül Ahmet's friends saw the date line inscribed on the fountain and congratulated him for the construction. Then, a man among the crowd read the date line as follows:



**“Gel Kel Ahmet çeşmesinden iç  
gilâb âsâ suyu”** which means “Come,  
drink from the fountain of bold Ahmet  
which is like mud.”

Gül Ahmet, who heard this reading,  
got upset but did not say anything. How-  
ever, then another man read the line as  
follows:

**“Gel Kil Ahmet çeşmesinden iç  
kilâb-âsâ suyu”** which was worse in  
meaning. It means “Come, drink from  
the water of the fountain of clay Ahmet

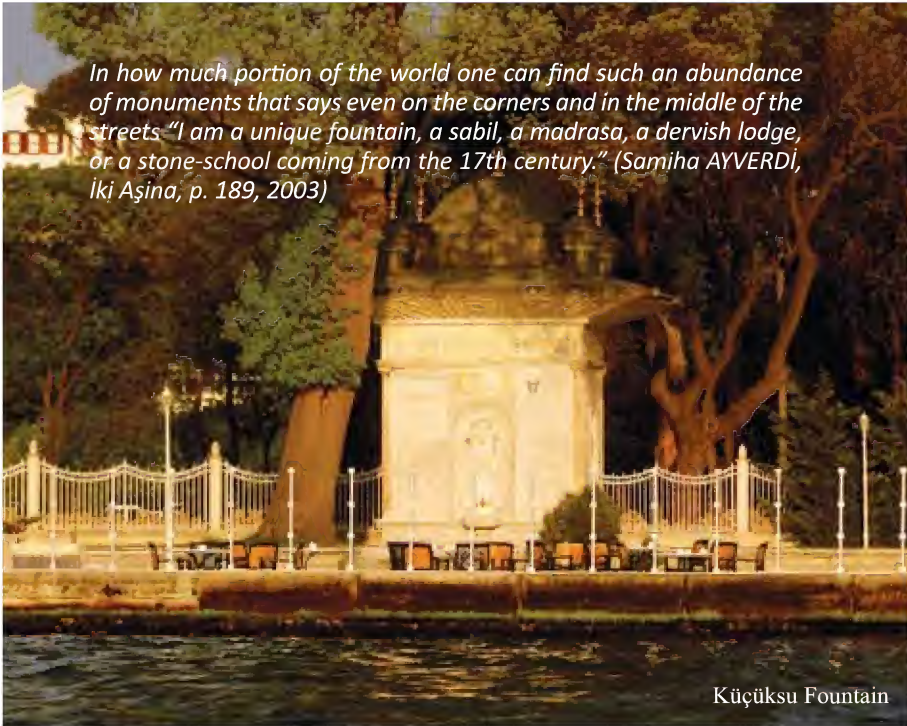
which is like the drinking water of the  
dogs.” When another man tried to read  
the line in another way, Gül Ahmed  
could not stand anymore and said:

- What kind of a date line is this?

The poet responded this question as  
if taking his revenge:

- Sir! It is a nice date line, do not  
pay attention to it. These poets' words  
are like rubber. It means whatever you  
want from them. (İskender PALA, Zaman  
Newspaper, July 26, 2001.) □

*In how much portion of the world one can find such an abundance  
of monuments that says even on the corners and in the middle of the  
streets “I am a unique fountain, a sabil, a madrasa, a dervish lodge,  
or a stone-school coming from the 17th century.” (Samiha AYVERDİ,  
İki Aşına, p. 189, 2003)*



Küçüksu Fountain

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